

Focal Point Ireland: national report for 2019 - Drug markets and crime

Health Research Board. Irish Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

Authors of the national report

Lucy Dillon, Brian Galvin, Ciara Guiney, Suzi Lyons, and Sean Millar

Head of Irish Focal Point

Brian Galvin

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T0. Summary

T0.1 National profile

- Domestic drug market

The only drug produced in Ireland is cannabis. However, the market is constantly changing; pre-precursors such as alpha-phenylacetoacetonitrile (APAAN) and benzyl cyanide, and precursors such as piperonyl methyl ketone (PMK) and benzyl methyl ketone (BMK), have been detected in Ireland in the past number of years. Synthetic drugs are not produced in Ireland, nor are general illegal drugs tableted. Ireland is viewed as an end source not a transit country. Its long coastline acts as a route for drugs to be brought into the United Kingdom (UK) and the rest of Europe. In 2018, law enforcement operations on the island of Ireland carried out by the Revenue Commissioners and An Garda Síochána (AGS) indicated that illegal drugs brought into Ireland originated in Europe (Belgium, Spain, France, Romania); Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya); the United States of America (USA); Canada; United Arab Emirates (Dubai); and Asia (Indonesia, Pakistan, Thailand). The main modes of transport were by freight via Rosslare Europort and Dublin Port, by plane via Dublin Airport, or via the postal system.

- National drug law offences

Information regarding Ireland's drug law offences comes from the Courts Service, the Irish Prison Service (IPS), and AGS data via the Central Statistics Office (CSO). Data provided by the Courts Service and the IPS refer to the total number of drug offences and are not differentiated by drug type. However, AGS data, which differentiate by drug type, indicate that the total number of drug offences detected increased by 9% between 2017 and 2018. By type of drug offence for the supply offences, importation of drugs and cultivation or manufacture of drugs, the number of incidents decreased between 2017 and 2018 by 29% and 19%, respectively. For possession offences, between 2017 and 2018 there were increases in possession of drugs for sale or supply (8%) and possession of drugs for personal use (10%).

- Key drug supply-reduction activities

Ireland is very committed to reducing drug supply, as evidenced by law enforcement response demonstrated in key actions in the national drugs strategy and policing plans which have been implemented across the island of Ireland. A multifaceted, multi-agency approach has been drawn upon; this includes collaborative working and information sharing between Irish law enforcement agencies such as AGS, the Revenue Commissioners, the IPS and the Probation Service at a national level; and between cross-border agencies such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and European and international agencies. Operations have focused on drug interdiction and have targeted organised crime groups (OCGs), gangland crime and drug-related intimidation; for example, the Garda National Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau (GNDOCB) was established to tackle drugs and organised crime, and Operation Hybrid was implemented by AGS to target gangland crime. Agencies have aimed to address reoffending: a new Irish Youth Justice Action Plan is currently being developed, and interventions are being reviewed and strengthened. On the island of Ireland, Garda Youth Diversion Projects for juveniles and youth have been established; child detention schools that have youth advocacy programmes have also been established. The Probation Service prioritises positive behaviour and restorative practice. Intervention and prevention strategies are ongoing.

T1. National profile

T1.1 Drug market

Domestic production

Cannabis

The domestic cultivation of cannabis herb escalated in Ireland in 2007, reaching a peak in 2011. Despite substantial interventions by law enforcement, it continues to be cultivated. The most recent figures available have indicated that 200 incidents of cultivation or manufacture of drugs were recorded in 2018 (see Section T2.3, Figure T2.3.4 in this workbook). As stated in previous workbooks, there are several reasons for this continued cultivation: first, sophisticated growing techniques are utilised, which result in the flowering tops of the female plant being highly potent (20% tetrahydrocannabinol [THC]), making it more profitable. Second, start-up and running costs

are low (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2015) along with the availability of vacant houses as a result of the 2008 financial crisis (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2018). Third, individuals avail of advances in technology and communication, as demonstrated by the Windle study detailed in Section T4.1. Other reasons that have emerged and have been reported by the media are that some offenders are growing cannabis to help manage existing medical health conditions (Lucey 2017, 10 March), (Nic Ardghail 2017, 21 November), (Maguire 2017, 9 February), (McLean 2017, 8 February).

Synthetic drugs

As stated in the Drugs and Crime workbook, National Report 2018, synthetic drugs are not produced in Ireland (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2017). However, the synthetic drug market is continually changing; as highlighted in previous workbooks, pre-precursors (APAAN, benzyl cyanide) and precursors (PMK and BMK), which are used in the manufacture of 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine [MDMA] and amphetamine were detected in Ireland in 2013 (An Garda Síochána and Police Service of Northern Ireland 2016). More recently, four separate 'box labs' were detected in Youghal, Co Cork; Tralee, Co Kerry; Lusk, North County Dublin; and in Dublin 8, suggesting that methamphetamine was being produced, albeit on a small scale (An Garda Síochána and Police Service of Northern Ireland 2016).

Tableting operations

As stated in previous workbooks, tableting of general illegal drugs does not really take place in Ireland (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2017). However, as reported in the National Report 2016, there has been some evidence that Irish OCGs have participated in tableting pharmaceutical drugs; for example, drugs such as zopiclone, zolpidem or benzodiazepines have been obtained in powder form and then used to produce tablets using specialised equipment (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2016). More recently, in May 2018, a pill-making factory linked to the Kinahan OCG and run by three males resident in Ireland but formerly from Eastern Europe was discovered in Celbridge, Co Kildare (see Table T1.1.2.2, Section T.1.1.2) (An Garda Síochána 2018, 6 May), (Pope C 2018, 6 May). Tableting machines, which have mainly been found in Irish grow houses, tend to be archaic and slow when compared with those that are found elsewhere, for example in the Netherlands. Irish law enforcement agencies do not view the tableting process as chemical drug synthesis because all that occurs is that tablets and binding agents are pressed together (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2017).

1.1.2 Routes of trafficking

As stated in previous Drug market and crime workbooks, Ireland's extensive 3,000 km coastline leaves it susceptible to traffickers seeking less-guarded routes to bring drugs to the UK and Europe (McDonald and Townsend 2007, 8 July). Identifying the origin of drugs being transported to Ireland can be difficult, as Ireland is primarily an end source and not a transit country (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2017). Nonetheless, the most recent analysis available of cross-border crime and threat assessment published by the PSNI and AGS indicated that drugs originated from, for example, Morocco (cannabis resin), the Netherlands (synthetic and semi-synthetic drugs), Afghanistan via Balkan routes (heroin), China (new psychoactive substances [NPS]), and India and Pakistan (counterfeit medicines) (An Garda Síochána and Police Service of Northern Ireland 2016).

At an international level, the Revenue Commissioners also continued its engagement at an international level with the World Customs Organization (WCO), Europol, INTERPOL, the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats (EMPACT), the Irish Embassy in the UK, and the Maritime Analysis and Operation Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) in ongoing actions aimed at addressing threats, intercepting and preventing the trafficking of drugs, illegal medicines, NPS and drug precursors (Revenue Commissioners 2019).

Additionally, interdictions carried out independently and collaboratively by Irish law enforcement agencies – such as the Revenue Customs Drug Law Enforcement (RCDLE) Unit, the GNDOCB of AGS, the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) and the Naval Service – at a national and international level can provide useful information on the origin, and sometimes the intended final

destination within Ireland, of drugs being brought into the country (personal communication, Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2017).

Additional information was gleaned from Revenue Commissioners press releases. Table T1.1.2.1 shows that illegal drugs brought into Ireland originated in places such as Europe (Belgium, Spain, France, Romania); Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya); the USA; Canada; the United Arab Emirates (Dubai) and Asia (Indonesia, Pakistan, Thailand) (Revenue Commissioners, 2018). The main mode of transport was freight via Rosslare Europort and Dublin Port, or by plane via Dublin. Products that arrived by plane were concealed in luggage and packages. Another method that was also used was the postal system. A number of products were intercepted by post in controlled deliveries (see Table T1.1.2.1).

Table T1.1.2.2 is based on press releases by AGS, and provides a summary of operations carried out independently and jointly by various AGS units, for example the GNDOCB, the Special Crime Task Force, detective units, traffic divisions, dog units, uniformed community gardaí, and divisional drug units (DDUs). Although operations were carried out across the island of Ireland, nearly 50% of press releases reported that drugs were seized in the Dublin area. The estimated value of products ranged from €500 to €10 million. All products that were seized by AGS in offences that were related to the sale and supply of drugs were sent to Forensic Science Ireland (FSI) for analysis, and thus the estimated weight of seized products was only provided for some operations. In 2018, drugs seized were mainly located via house, premises and vehicle searches, often as part of intelligence-led operations (see Table T1.1.2.2).

Table 1.1.2.1 Origins, estimated value, estimated weight, concealment details of drugs that were brought into Ireland in 2018 seized in Joint operations with Inland Revenue

Product type	Date	Estimated weight/no of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Nationality	Age	Seized at	Transit ^a Consigned from ^b Manufactured ^c Originated ^d Departed from ^e	Concealed or found in	Detained under
Steroids	10/01/18		€54,000	Inland Revenue				Dublin Port	Holyhead, UK	Truck search	
Mescaline (drugs)	23/01/18	1.5 kg	€80,000	Inland Revenue GNDOCB Cork Drugs Unit	Male	Spanish	40s	Cork		Residential search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Herbal cannabis Cocaine	31/01/18	11.5 kg	€230,000 €7,000	Inland Revenue GNDOCB Finglas Drugs Unit		Foreign National	55	West Dublin		Package concealed in large soft toy	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Herbal cannabis	01/02/18	4 kg	€80,000	Inland Revenue GNDOCB Kilkenny Drugs Unit	Male	Irish	33	Kilkenny		House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Herbal cannabis	05/02/18	6 kg 4 kg 1.5 kg	€230,000	Inland Revenue				Portlaoise Mail Centre	Thailand ^b Nigeria ^b Spain ^b	Detector dog Stella Wicker box Plastic bottles toys	
Herbal cannabis	09/02/18	33.7 kg	€675,000	Inland Revenue				Dublin Port	Spain ^e	Detector dog Meg – Consignment of dried goods	
Herbal cannabis	09/03/18	3 kg	€60,000	Inland Revenue GNPCB Tralee Garda Drugs Unit	Male Male		43 27	Tralee, Co Kerry	Thailand	Residential House search concealed in household linen	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Herbal cannabis	15/03/18	4.5 kg	€90,000	Inland Revenue GNDOCB Dundalk Garda Drugs Unit	Male	Irish	28	Co Louth	Canada ^d	Concealed in blankets	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine	29/03/18	400 g	€35,000	Inland Revenue GNPCB Longford/Roscommon Division Drugs Unit	Male	Non-national	40s	County Roscommon	Chile ^d	House search – concealed in package	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine MDMA Ketamine*	31/03/18		€2.1m	Inland Revenue GNDOCB	Male	Non-national	55	Dublin Port		Truck Search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996

Herbal cannabis	05/04/18	1 kg	€20,000	Inland Revenue Crumlin Garda GNDOCB	Male	Irish	26	Dublin Port	Canada ^d	House search concealed in vacuum packed parcel containing 'tea'	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine	15/04/18	1.4 kg	€98,000	Inland Revenue	Male		47	Dublin Airport	Addis Ababa ^e	Stop and search	
Cocaine pellets	03/05/18	total 6.6 kg	€132,000	Inland Revenue	Male		30s	Dublin Airport	Madrid ^e	Stop and search	
Herbal cannabis	09/05/18	500 g	€10,000	Inland Revenue	Female	Irish	28	Tallaght Dublin		House search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cocaine			€5,000	GNDOCB Tallaght Drugs Unit							
Cannabis	09/05/18		€2,000	Inland Revenue Local Gardai	Male Female	Polish Polish	20s 20s	Middleton, East Cork		Assisted by Detector dog Marley Found cannabis grow house in house search	
Herbal cannabis	15/05/18	<500 g	€12,000	Inland Revenue GNDOCB Naas Drugs Unit	Male		22	Naas, Co Kildare		House search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Herbal cannabis	17/05/18	500 g	€9,000	Inland Revenue GNDOCB Coolock Drugs Unit	Male		25	Coolock, Dublin		House search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Herbal cannabis	30/05/18	6 kg	€120,000	Inland Revenue				Portlaoise Mail Centre	Spain ^d	Concealed in vacuum packed parcels	
Ketamine	06/06/18	20 g	€13,200	Inland Revenue GNDOCB Dunlaoghaire Garda	Male	Chinese	34	Dun Laoghaire, Dublin	Spain ^d	Business premises search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Methamphetamine		200 g						Dublin Port	Romania ^e	Package	
Medicines 'steroids'	11/06/18	1,640 300	€4,500	Inland Revenue							
Medicine vials	15/06/18	24 kg	€489,000	Inland revenue				Dublin Port	Spain ^e	Detector dog Meg consignment marked 'goods'	
Herbal cannabis										Package labelled	
Heroin	19/06/18		€1.1m	Inland Revenue GNDOCB				Dublin Airport	Pakistan ^d		

Herbal cannabis	22/06/18	1 kg+	€23,000	Inland Revenue	Male	17	Dublin 7		'household goods' House search assisted by Detector dog Bailey, Concealed in vacuum cleaner	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Herbal cannabis	26/06/18	6.2 kg	€124,000	Inland Revenue			Portlaoise Mail centre	Thailand ^d	Concealed in parcels marked 'gifts'	
Cannabis-infused jelly sweets Herbal cannabis	09/07/18	2 kg 50 g	€11,000	Inland Revenue			Portlaoise Mail centre	USA ^d	Detected by detector dog Stella in parcel marked 'beauty products'	
Herbal cannabis	09/07/18	600 g	€12,000	Inland Revenue			Portlaoise mail centre	Spain ^d	Detected by detector dog Stella concealed in tins marked 'coffee products'	
MDMA Ketamine Herbal cannabis	17/07/18	30 kg 20 kg 1 kg	€3m €20,000	Inland Revenue GNDOCB	Male	43	Kilbarrack, Dublin		Van stop and search and follow up house search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Herbal cannabis Tablets Drugs paraphernalia Herbal cannabis	17/07/18	500 g	€10,000	Inland revenue GNDOCB Dungarvan Drugs Unit	Male	33	Fermoy, Cork		House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Herbal cannabis	19/07/18	7.5 kg	€148,000	Inland Revenue			Portlaoise mail centre	Spain ^d	2 parcels, 4 kg destined for Dublin12 3.4 kg destined for Dublin 15	
Herbal cannabis	23/07/18	500 g+	€12,900	Inland Revenue			Dublin mail centre	Belgium ^d	Concealed in parcel destined for	

Herbal cannabis	23/07/18	3.5 kg	€70,000	Inland Revenue GNDOCB Regional Support Unit Cavan Monaghan Drugs Unit	Male	Lithuania	45	Castleblaney , Co Monaghan		Dublin North City House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Amphetamines	30/07/18	36 kg	€545,000	Inland Revenue Local Garda	Male		40s	Rosslare Europort		Truck scanning	
Herbal cannabis	14/08/18	1+ kg	€24,000	Inland Revenue GNDOCB	Male	Irish	25	Lucan, Co Dublin		House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Methamphetamine	21/08/18	100 g	€6,000	Inland Revenue DDU Anglesea Street, Dublin GNDOCB	Male	Irish	48	Cork city		House search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cocaine Suspected MDMA	28/08/18	36 kg 11 kg	€3m	Inland Revenue				Dublin Port	Europe ^d	Detected by Mobile X-ray scanner and detector dog Meg	
Herbal cannabis	30/08/18	1.5 kg	€30,000	Inland Revenue DDU Angelsea Street, Dublin GNDOCB	Male	Irish	19	Portlaoise Mail Centre	USA ^d	Destined for Cork Address	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Mitragynine Powder	03/10/18	12 kg	€249,000	Inland Revenue				Portlaoise Mail Centre	Indonesia	Destined for address in Roscommon and Dublin	
Herbal cannabis	03/10/18	350 g	€7,000	Inland Revenue				Portlaoise Mail Centre	USA ^d	Destined for Dublin address	
Khat	03/10/18		€2,000	Inland Revenue				Portlaoise Mail Centre	Kenya	Concealed in tin of biscuits Destined for Dublin address	
Herbal cannabis	10/10/18	3.6 kg	€70,000	Inland Revenue GNDOCB DDU Bray	Male	Irish	40s	Bray, Co Wicklow		House Search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Heroin suspected	12/10/18	13 kg	€1.8m	Inland Revenue	Male	UK	20s	Dublin Airport	Dubai ^b	Concealed in luggage	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996

Cannabis resin	12/10/18	67 kg	€403,000	Inland Revenue	Male	UK	40s	Rosslare Europort	Cherbourg ^b	Chassis sills SUV jeep stop and search Mobile X-ray scanner Detector Dog Defor	
Cannabis resin	15/10/18	3.5 kg	€21,000	Inland Revenue				Portlaoise Mail Centre	Thailand ^d	Destined for Dublin Concealed in inner lining of suitcase marked 'baby clothes'	
Herbal cannabis	16/10/18	7 kg	€140,000	Inland Revenue				Portlaoise Mail Centre	Thailand ^d	Detector dog stella	
Herbal cannabis	17/10/18	9 kg	€178,000	Inland Revenue DDU Limerick GNDOCB	Male	Nigerian	45	Limerick city		Found in package search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Herbal cannabis	17/10/18	3 kg	€60,000	Inland Revenue	Male	Irish	55	Co Louth		House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine	03/11/18	66 kg	€4.6m	Inland Revenue GNDOCB				Rosslare Europort		Mobile X-ray scanner and detector dog Defor in inbound freight	
Heroin	16/11/18	15 kg	€2.1m	Inland Revenue	Female Male		50s 30s	Dublin Airport	Lahore, Pakistan	Hidden in luggage	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Herbal cannabis	04/12/18	68 kg	€1.36m	Inland Revenue				Dublin Port	Spain ^d	Goods	
Herbal cannabis	20/12/18	11 kg	€220,000	Inland Revenue				Dublin Port		Detector dog James Concealed in flat pack tables consignment	

Note. GNDOCB = Garda National Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau; Revenue Customs= Revenue Commissioners Customs personnel; m = million SCTF = Special Crime Task Force; DMR = Dublin Metropolitan Region; kg = kilograms; g = grams; tab = tablets.

Source: (Revenue Commissioners Website: Press Releases for 2018)

Table T1.1.2.2 Origins, estimated value, estimated weight, and concealment details of drugs that were brought into Ireland in 2017 seized by various AGS units

Product type	Date	Estimated weight/ no of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Age	Seized at	Concealed or found in	Detained under
Cocaine*	03/01/18		€70,000	GNDOCB SCTF	Male Male	35 23	Finglas, Dublin		Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis resin	11/01/18		€200,000	Garda	Male	41	Cork	Search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis plants	24/01/18		€2.7m	Garda	Male		Dublin	Warehouse search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Crystal meth lab Cocaine*	25/01/18 15/02/18		€500,000	Garda GNDOCB	Male Male	50s 19	Maynooth	Car search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine Speed MDMA Cannabis Heroin*	22 and 23 /02/18			Gardaí from Birr/Tullamore GNDOCB	Females 3 Males 11		Tullamore and Birr	Sold drugs to undercover gardaí	Misuse of Drugs Act, 1977/84, as amended
Weighing scales/other drug paraphernalia	05/03/18		€75,000	Laois/Offaly DDU Gardaí from Street Crime Unit	Male	18	Dublin	Residence search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis	16/03/18		€1.4m	GNDOCB SCTF	Male	48	Dublin	Residence search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine	22/03/18			GNDOCB	Male	30	Dublin	Vehicle search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis Ketamine Paraphernalia Cannabis herb	30/03/18		€1.6m	GNDOCB Europol Poland	Male Male	38 39	Dublin	Premises search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis	30/03/18			PSNI AGS Revenue Commissioners			Co Down	Industrialised fuel tank	Cross Border Operation
Cocaine	05/04/18		€50,000	GNDOCB	Male Male	30s 30s	Kilkenny city	Two vehicles searched	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis herb Firearm	10/04/18		€1,000	Gardaí	Male	37	Sligo	House search	Section 30 Offences against the State Act, 1939/98
Cannabis herb*	14/04/18		€38,000	Gardaí on patrol	Male	39	Cahir, Co Tipperary	Car search	
Money laundering activities: cash	17/04/18		€250,000	GNDOCB Special Crime Operations	Five males One female	27 to 31 24	Dublin	Searches several addresses	OCG suspected of drug trafficking Ireland, Australia and New Zealand

Product type	Date	Estimated weight/ no of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigator	Suspects	Age	Seized at	Concealed or found in	Detained under
Cannabis Amphetamine Mixing agent*	23/04/18	12 kg 500 g 10 kg	€248,000	Local Detective Units DMR North Division Australian Federal Police GNDOCB	Male Male	32 37	Swords, Co Dublin	Two properties searched	Detained Section 50 Criminal Justice Act 2007 Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984 Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis plants	30/04/18		€80,000	Gardaí	Male	40s	Drogheda, Co Meath	House search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cocaine Heroin Tablets	30/04/18		€175,000	Gardaí Tallaght	Male	40s	Donomore, Dublin	House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis* Alprazolam tablets	30/04/18		€13,000 €55,000	Limerick DDU	Male	50s	Limerick city	Premises search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis resin Cannabis grow house Cannabis plants	05/05/18		€110,000	Clontarf Drugs Unit Dublin Fire Brigade	Male	20s	Marino, Dublin 3	House fire	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Pill-making factory Blenders Industrial pill-making machine; Drugs in powder and pill form*	06/05/18		€500,000	GNDOCB SCTF	Three males	30s 40s	Celbridge, Co Kildare	Residence search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis resin MDMA	10/05/18		€225,000 €110,000	Meath Drugs Unit Navan Detective Unit	Male Male Female	23 36 27	Navan, Co Meath	Premises search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis herb	11/05/18		€250,000	Clare DDU	Male	40s	Ennis, Co Clare	Vehicle search and follow up house search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis herb	16/05/18	1 kg	€100,000	Gardaí Store St Dublin	Male Male		Parnell St Dublin1	Acting suspiciously and observed exchanging ruck sacks that were searched	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Heroin* Heroin*	21/05/18		€2,000 €43,000	Ronanstown Drugs Unit	Male		Ronanstown, Dublin	On his person and follow up search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cannabis herb*	22/05/18	3 kg	€60,000	Gardaí Cobh	Female	30s	Cobh, Co Cork	House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine*	23/05/18		€220,000	Gardaí Carlow	Male	30s	Carlow	Suspicious	Section 2 Criminal Justice

Product type	Date	Estimated weight/ no of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Age	Seized at	Concealed or found in	Detained under
Ketamine*					Male	20s		behaviour beside two cars	(Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
MDMA	01/06/18		€35,000	Gardaí Leixlip	Male	30s	Leixlip, Co Kildare	Stop and search	
Cannabis herb			€20,000						
Cannabis herb	02/06/18		€299,000	Wexford District Drugs Unit	Male	30s	Carne, Co Wexford	House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine									
Cannabis resin									
Cannabis herb*	06/06/18		€47,000	Laois/Offaly Divisional Drugs Unit	Male	30s	Portarlinton	House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Materials for cutting and preparing drugs for street sale				Local detectives	Male	30s			
Cannabis herb	07/06/18		€25,000	Armed Support Unit Mullingar Drugs Unit	Male	40s	Mullingar, Westmeath	Car stop and search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis herb	13/06/18		€560,000	GNDOCB SCTF	Male	42	Blanchardstown, Dublin	Vehicle search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
					Male	39			
					Female	46			
Cannabis*	20/06/18			GNDOCB	Seven	18 to 55	Longford area	Search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cocaine*				Gardaí Roscommon/Longford Division	Two				
Heroin*				Armed Support Unit	males				
Cannabis herb	07/07/18		€200,000	Gardaí Limerick	Two				
					females				
Cannabis herb					Male	30s	Limerick	Premises search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis resin*	31/07/18		€135,000	Gardaí Sligo/Leitrim Division	Male	50	Carrick on Shannon, Co Leitrim	Vehicle search	Section 2 (Drug Trafficking Act) 1996
			€5,000					Follow up search	
Cannabis resin*	03/08/18		€33,000	SCTF GNDOCB	Male	50s	Dublin	House search	Section 2 of the Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Heroin	08/08/18		€600	Gardaí Cork	Male	40s	Cork city	Person search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cannabis Plants	12/08/18	140	€112,000	Gardaí Killarney District			Co Kerry	House search	
Cannabis herb*			€80,000						
Cannabis	14/08/18		€100,000	DDU Limerick	Male	50s	Limerick	Premises search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
				Revenue Customs					
Cannabis herb	14/08/18		€24,000	GNDOCB	Male	25	Dublin	Package search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
				Revenue Customs					
				Drugs Unit Ronanstown					
Cocaine	14/08/18	133 kg	€10m	GNDOCB			Polar Chile Ship	Cargo of fruit	
				Drug Control Police,				destined for Ireland	

Product type	Date	Estimated weight/ no of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Age	Seized at	Concealed or found in	Detained under
Crack cocaine* Firearms	16/08/18		€85,000	Costa Rica Revenue customs Armed Support Unit Ballyfermot Detective Unit	Male	22	Dublin	Two searches	Section 30 Offences Against the State Act, 1939
Cocaine MDMA	16/08/18		€50,000 €90,000	Ronanstown Drugs Unit	Male	18	Dublin	Person search House search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cocaine	16/08/18		€45,000	Gardaí Mayfield	Male	20s	Cork city	Person search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cocaine*	16/08/18		€68,000	Gardaí Dundalk Armed Support Unit	Male	26	Dundalk, Co Louth	Premises search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cocaine*	16/08/18		€50,000	Tipperary Division	Male Male	30s 40s	Abbeyleix, Laois	Vehicle search	Section 2 Drug Trafficking Criminal Justice Act, 1996
Cocaine*	18/08/18		€64,000	Crumlin Drugs Unit	Male	25	Drimnagh, Dublin	House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis herb Cannabis*	20/08/18		€14,000 €5,000	DDU Anglesea Street	Male	20s	Carrignavar, Co Cork	Apartment search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cocaine* Heroin* Heroin and crack cocaine*	24/08/18	4.5 kg	€4,000 €670,000	GNDOCB SCTF And other specialized units Dublin Metropolitan Regions	Two females		Dublin	Vehicle search House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drugs Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis herb Diamorphine	26/08/18	5 kg 12 oz	€100,000 €50,000	DDU Limerick Armed Support Unit	Male	56	Limerick	House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis herb	26/08/18		€500	Gardaí Tralee	Male	20s	Tralee, Co Kerry	Person search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cannabis herb	26/08/18		€21,000	DDU Clare	Male	22	Milltown Malbay, Co Clare	House search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cocaine	30/08/18		€30,000	Gardaí Dublin	Male	17	Drimnagh, Dublin	House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis herb* Cocaine*	01/09/18		€3,000 €500	Gardaí Blanchardstown & Finglas	Male	31	Dublin	Apartment search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis herb	03/09/18		€500,000	GNDOCB	Female	26	Dublin	Vehicle search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Heroin Diazepam Xanax	06/09/18		€1.68m €150,000	DDU Lucan Gardaí Ronanstown	Male Female	50s 40s	Dublin	Residence search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis herb Benzodiazepines	08/09/18	2 buckets	€10,000	Gardaí Waterford	Four	25	Waterford	Vehicle search	Section 2 Criminal Justice

Product type	Date	Estimated weight/ no of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Age	Seized at	Concealed or found in	Detained under
Prescriptions drugs		loose box			Males	26 26 29			(Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine	09/09/18		5,000	DDU Drogheda Armed Support Unit			Drogheda, Co Louth	Halting site search	
Cocaine	14/09/18		€8,000	Gardaí Blanchardstown	Male	20s	Dublin	House search and follow-up vehicle search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cannabis herb	19/09/18			GNDOCB SCTF DMR North Central Division	Male	24	Dublin city	Seven premises searched	
Heroin	19/09/18			DMR North Central Division					
Cannabis herb	27/09/18		€1m	Gardaí Louth	Male	25	Co Louth	House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Heroin	05/10/18		€90,000	DDU Tipperary	Male	40s	Co Tipperary	Vehicle stop and search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine	11/10/18		€9,000	Gardaí Angle Street	Male	20s	Co Cork	House search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Ecstasy			€5,000	Cork	Male	20s			
Cannabis			€4,200						
Cannabis herb	16/10/18	23 kg	€920,000	Detective and Drugs Units	Three males	30s 40s 60s	Dublin	Grounds of apartment block during handover	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine				Ballyfermot/Clondalkin				And Follow up search	
Heroin		1 kg							
Cocaine		3.5 kg							
Cannabis resin		10 kg							
Heroin	17/10/18	4 kg	€595,000	DDU Tallaght	Female	20s	Tallaght, Dublin	House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine		500 g							
Cannabis herb	18/10/18		€325,000	Gardaí Ballymote District Divisional Drugs and Crime Units			Sligo	House search	
Cannabis plants	30/10/18		€102,000	West Cork Garda Division	Male	30s	West Cork		
Cannabis herb					Female	20s			
Second Grow house with	30/10/18		€46,600	DDU Bandon			Bandon, Co Cork	House fire	
Cannabis plants			€8,400						
Cannabis herb									
Cocaine*	06/11/18		€100,000	Tallaght Drugs Unit	Male	30s	Rathfarnham Dublin	Premises search	
LDS*									
MDMA*									

Product type	Date	Estimated weight/ no of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Age	Seized at	Concealed or found in	Detained under
Cannabis resin Ecstasy tablets Cannabis herb Cocaine	09/11/18		€180,000	DDU Cork	Two Males	Mid 50s Late 40s	Passage West, Cork	Two house searches	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis grow house Cocaine	15/11/18 16/11/18	2 kg	€47,000 €145,000	DDU Bandon GNDOCB Supported by Security and Intelligence in Dublin	Male Female Male	30s 20s 39	Bandon, Co Cork Blanchardstown, Dublin	Search of three houses Vehicle search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984 Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis herb Methamphetamine	18/11/18		€20,000 €22,000	North Central Divisional Drugs Unit	Female	34	Dublin 7	Stop and search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis Methamphetamine Amphetamine Cocaine Cocaine* Heroin*	20/11/18		€528,000 €60,000	Street Crime Unit, Kevin Street, Dublin	Male Male	30s 30s	Dublin	Follow-up flat search Premises search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis grow house Cannabis plants Cannabis herb Cocaine Ecstasy tablets LSD	23/11/18		€34,000	Gardaí Cork	Male	30s	Cork city	Apartment search	Section 4 Criminal Justice Act, 1984
Cannabis herb Cocaine	23/11/18 28/11/18		€600,000 €60,000	GNDOCB Gardaí Louth Division DDU Carlow/Kilkenny	Male	46 30s	Ardee, Co Louth Carlow town	Premises search House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996 Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis cocaine Cannabis grow house Cannabis plants Cocaine	30/11/18 01/12/18 06/12/18	320	€90,000 €256,000 €2.8m	Gardaí Ballymun District Gardaí Carrickmacross, Monaghan GNDOCB SCTF	Three males Three males female	40s 40s 40s	Ballymun, Dublin Dublin	House search Two vehicles searched	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996 Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cannabis herb Cannabis	06/12/18 06/12/18		€800,000 €200,000	GNDOCB Gardaí Finglas	Male	40s 20s	Dublin Finglas Dublin	Vehicle search House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996 Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996

Product type	Date	Estimated weight/ no of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Age	Seized at	Concealed or found in	Detained under
Cocaine	06/12/18		€70,000	Gardaí Limerick	Male	20s	Limerick	House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine	18/12/18		€100,000	Gardaí Drimnagh	Male	18	Dublin	Vehicle stop and search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine	19/12/18		€56,000	Garda Clare and Limerick Division	Male	41	Clare	Vehicle search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine			€17,500		Male	36	Limerick	House search	
Cannabis			€24,000						
Heroin*	22/12/18		€500,000	DDU Terenure	Male	47	Rathmines, Dublin	House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Cocaine*									
Cannabis herb	17/08/19		€20,000	Revenue Customs	Male	23	New Bawn, Wexford	House search	Section 2 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996
Methamphetamine				Customs Dog unit					
Ecstasy				GNDOCB					
Cocaine	24/08/19	1.5 kg	€105,000	Gardaí Clare	Male	20s	Co Clare	House and vehicle search	
Cannabis herb		1 kg	€20,000						
Cocaine		500 g	€35,000						

1.1.3 Contextual information on trafficking

As stated in previous Drug market and crime workbooks, only one study has examined the nature, structure and organisation of the illegal drug markets in Ireland (Connolly J and Donovan A M 2014). Four local drug markets were included: two urban, one suburban and one rural (anonymised as A–D). Although cannabis was shown to be the main drug supplied, heroin, crack cocaine and prescription drugs could also be obtained at different levels across all locations surveyed. Further information on this study can be found in the Drug market and crime workbook, National Report 2015 (Health Research Board and Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs Drug Addiction 2016). To date, no other study provides contextual information on drug trafficking in Ireland. However, figures from FSI for 2018 indicated that the most prominent drugs analysed in Ireland were cannabis herb, cocaine and heroin, followed by MDMA, cannabis resin, alprazolam and cannabis plants (personal communication, FSI, 2019). Table T1.1.5.1 in Section T1.1.5 lists the illegal drugs in Ireland, based on FSI records for 2018 in descending order. Trends for these substances can be found in Section T2.1

Size of transactions

Tables T1.1.2.1 and T1.1.2.2 show that transaction sizes for drugs varied by product. These figures only represent cases where quantities were reported; in many instances, Garda press releases did not report quantities, as the product was sent directly to FSI for analysis.

Smuggling methods

As shown in Tables T1.1.2.1 and T1.1.2.2, drugs were smuggled into Ireland via:

- airports – products were transported in two ways: either concealed or in checked-in luggage; marked household goods
- ports – vehicle search, truck, packages and consignments labelled dried goods, tea, flat pack tables
- the postal network – drugs were concealed in packages, such as, wicker boxes, plastic bottles, toys, vacuum-packed parcels. Some were marked ‘gifts’, ‘beauty products’, ‘coffee products’ ‘clothing’ or ‘baby clothing’.

The common travel area between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland is also vulnerable to criminality via hauliers who, knowingly and sometimes unknowingly, transport drugs between both locations for OCGs (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2018); (National Crime Agency 2018).

Organisation

As stated in the Drug market and crime workbook, National Report 2018, the Irish drug market is widely dispersed around the island of Ireland, and impacts on urban, suburban and rural communities (Connolly and Buckley 2016). The main players that profit the most are OCGs of various nationalities; for example, Irish, Chinese, Vietnamese and Eastern Europeans OCGs profit the most (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2017). However, there is also evidence to suggest that individual entrepreneur networks which started small are now prospering (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2017). Ongoing research by Dr Sean Redmond and colleagues at Limerick University on criminal networks in Ireland has illustrated the existence of a hierarchical criminal network consisting of one individual (A2) and his family, which has had a negative impact on associates, clients and residents in a suburban estate.

1.1.4 Wholesale drug and precursor market

There were no changes to wholesale market prices in 2018. Basically, wholesale drug prices depend on two things: one, what quantity is being purchased; and two, the purity of the drug. Table T1.1.4.1 shows the wholesale prices based on average purity of product in terms of a purchase of one kilogram of a substance. For example, cocaine with a purity of 85% will sell for €60,000, but in reality, on the wholesale market OCGs already cut and mix the drugs. As a result, cocaine that the GNDOCB detects may be sold for approximately €25,000 per kilogram; the purity at this price will be

less than 40%. The premise of ‘the more you buy, the cheaper the price’ applies to all drugs. By way of example, a purchase of 100 MDMA (ecstasy) tablets could cost €5 per tablet, a purchase of 1,000 could cost €4 per tablet, a purchase of 10,000 could cost €3 per tablet, etc. There is no evidence of wholesale prices for some substances (see substances in Table T1.1.4.1 marked ‘NE’) (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2018).

Wholesale price data are determined from undercover purchases and covert human intelligence sources, which are gathered using a continuous assessment approach and consultation with nationwide drug unit supervisors. When the information is available, random samples are taken. There is no deviation from what is requested in the submitted data. Importantly, there is very little evidence regarding wholesale prices for some NPS producers, such as synthetic cannabinoids (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2018).

Table T1.1.4.1 Drug prices based on current wholesale market value of controlled drugs, October 2018

Drug	Category	Price per kilo/per litre
25I-NBOMe	Hallucinogen	N/A
2C-B	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
2C-E	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
2C-I	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
5AKB48 (not controlled)	Synthetic cannabinoid	NE
Alprazolam	Benzodiazepine	NE
AM-2201	Synthetic cannabinoid	€5,000 per kilo
Amphetamine	Phenethylamine	€3,000 per kilo
AMT	Tryptamine	NE
Benzylpiperazine	Piperazine	€10,000 per kilo
BKMBDB	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
Bromazepam	Benzodiazepine	NE
Butylone	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
Cannabis herb	Cannabis	€8,000 per kilo
Cannabis plants*	Cannabis	N/A
Cannabis resin	Cannabis	€1,500 per kilo
Chlordiazepoxide	Benzodiazepine	NE
Clobazam	Benzodiazepine	NE
Clonazepam	Benzodiazepine	NE
Cocaine	Cocaine	€25,000 per kilo
CPP	Piperazine	€10,000 per kilo
Diamorphine (heroin)	Opiate	€35,000 per kilo
Diazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Dimethylone	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
Dimethylamylamine (DMAA)	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
DMT	Tryptamine	NE
Ethcathinone	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
Ethylone	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
Flephedrone	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
Flunitrazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Fluoroamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€3,000 per kilo
Fluorotropacocaine	NPS	€10,000 per kilo
Flurazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
GBL	Solvent	€200 per litre
GHB	Solvent	€200 per litre
JWH-018	Synthetic cannabinoid	€5,000 per kilo
JWH-073	Synthetic cannabinoid	€5,000 per kilo
JWH-250	Synthetic cannabinoid	€5,000 per kilo
Ketamine	Hallucinogen	€10,000 per kilo
Khat	Hallucinogen	€100 per kilo
Lorazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Lormetazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
LSD	Hallucinogen	N/A
Lysergamide	Hallucinogen	NE
MAM-2201	Synthetic cannabinoid	NE
MBZP	Piperazine	€10,000 per kilo
mCPP	Piperazine	€10,000 per kilo
MDA	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
MDEA	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
MDMA	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
MDPBP	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
MDPV	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
MEC	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo

Drug	Category	Price per kilo/per litre
Mephedrone	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
Methadone	Opiate	N/A
Methedrone	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
Methoxetamine	Hallucinogen	€10,000 per kilo
Methoxyamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
Methylamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
Methylone	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
Methylphenidate	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
Mirtazapine	Benzodiazepine	N/A
MMC	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
Naphyrone	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
Nitrazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Pentedrone	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
Phenazepam (not controlled)	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Phentermine	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
PMA	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
PMMA	Phenethylamine	€10,000 per kilo
Prazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Psilocin	Hallucinogen	€10,000
Psilocybin	Hallucinogen	€10,000
PVP	Cathinone	€10,000 per kilo
RCS-4	Synthetic cannabinoid	NE
Salvinorin A	Hallucinogen	NE
STS-135	Synthetic cannabinoid	NE
Temazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Triazolam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
UR-144	Synthetic cannabinoid	NE
Zolpidem	Sleeping agent	N/A
Zopiclone (not controlled)	Sleeping agent	N/A

Note: NE = no evidence; N/A = not applicable.

Source: (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2019)

* Cannabis plants are valued based on the potential yield of the plant. An actual market value can only be applied when plants are fully mature and ready for sale. Charges contrary to Section 15A of the Misuse of Drugs Act (as amended) are not applied in relation to nursery plants or plants that are not fully mature.

Adulterants

The FSI laboratory analyses drugs seized by gardaí and other law enforcement agencies. The equipment used to calculate diamorphine, cocaine and amphetamines quants has been undergoing change. As a result, adulterant analysis is only available for cocaine samples, and the most recent data available are for 2017 (personal communication, FSI, 2019). The following adulterants were detected in the cocaine samples submitted from 127 cases:

- Levamisole was detected in approximately 30% of samples.
- Benzocaine was detected in approximately 31% of samples.
- Caffeine was detected in 12% of samples.
- Lignocaine was detected in approximately 4% of samples.
- Phenacetin was detected in approximately 2% of samples.
- Other detections included paracetamol (n=2), benzoic acid (n=2), creatine/creatinine (n=2), and methyl amphetamine (n=1).

Per sample analysed (n=145), 45% of cocaine samples contained one adulterant, 10% contained two adulterants, and 4% contained three adulterants. No adulterants were detected in approximately 41% (59) of samples submitted (personal communication, FSI, 2019).

Further information on the most recent available data for diamorphine and amphetamines, from 4 April 2013 to 15 December 2015, can be found in Section T1.1.4 of the Drug market and crime workbook, National Report 2016 (Health Research Board. Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction 2017).

Nature and organisation of buyers, sellers and intermediaries

The main organisations running drug markets on the island of Ireland are OCGs. The most recent data from cross-border reports highlighted that drugs and drug-related criminality has remained a concern throughout the island (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2018). Although 'traditional' drug importation routes are unchanged, the emergence of the dark web along with NPS and misuse of prescription medications have resulted in changes in drug abuse and OCG criminality.

'Traditional' drugs remain prominent. For example:

- Cannabis continues to be the most prevalent drug used/abused on the Island. At €29/£20 per gram, it is viewed by OCGs involved in wholesale importation and supply as profitable. Cannabis herb blocks or cultivated cannabis plants are mainly seized in the Republic of Ireland (ROI). However, other products, for example, cannabis resin and cannabis oil, have also been seized. Irish national OCGs are deeply implicated in this area, controlling routes and grow houses.
- Improved economic conditions recently have resulted in increased demand for cocaine and MDMA. Although it is possible to sell these drugs on the Dark Net, they do form a small part of OCG importations. OCGs that participate in 'polydrug dealing' are mainly smaller than 'traditional wholesale importers'. As a result, they can pose issues for law enforcement when trying to target the problem (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2018), (p. 7).
- Heroin continues to be a problem across Ireland. While the most problematic area is Greater Dublin, in recent years similar problems have arisen in small urban centres and rural towns and villages. The majority of opiate users reside in Dublin (71%) and are over 35 years of age (>50%). Heroin issues in the ROI are viewed as 'stable and entrenched' (p.7) (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2018). By contrast, in Northern Ireland (NI), the most problematic area is Belfast city centre, where drug use can be observed every day on the streets.
- In contrast to previous assessments, crack cocaine has recently emerged as an issue for law enforcement agencies and communities. For now, it is not viewed as a nationwide issue, but it is believed that it will need to be targeted in the future.
- Synthetic opioids have been a characteristic of Irish OCG activity since 2016. Although reported seizures of these products are low, only 0.02 mg of synthetic opioid carfentanil is needed in order to produce a fatal overdose. While this is not a crisis in the ROI and NI currently, there is evidence to suggest that OCGs are selling products on the premise that they are heroin, but in actual fact are heroin mixed with synthetic opioids and/or bulking agents.
- Another problem is that some OCGs are introducing synthetic opioids into the drug supply chain and this is placing drug users at considerable risk. This problem has been identified as an area that requires ongoing attention and monitoring.
- Prescription medication is an issue across the ROI and NI and involves the importation, manufacture and sale of pharmaceutical products. Benzodiazepines are popular with individuals who are using heroin, managing pain or trying to improve cognitive and/or physical function.
- Another emerging trend is the use of amphetamines by individuals attending third-level education. Targeting the illegal sale of these products is becoming more and more challenging. However, as prescription drug abuse increases, so too will be the issues around it.

Primarily, the cross-border elements of drug crime across Ireland centres on relationships between OCGs in the ROI and NI in the areas of control and supply. Although the links between the ROI and NI OCGs are extensive, collaborations among foreign national OCGs are stronger, as they see Ireland as one market. The most important supply route on the island is between Dublin and Belfast. This is due to excellent infrastructure linking both areas via motorways and transport systems. Irish OCGs make it possible for NI OCGs to access European drug markets, such as Spain, the Netherlands, and the UK. As a consequence, joint collaborations between the PSNI and AGS often involve collaborating with international agencies with the aim of stopping drug supply routes north and south of the border (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2018).

1.1.5 Retail drug market

Range and relative importance of different products

Seizure records for illegal drugs in Ireland provide the best source of the range and relative importance of different drugs on the Irish retail market. Based on FSI records, Table T1.1.5.1 lists, in descending order by quantity seized, the top 20 illegal drugs that are more prominent in Ireland. Trends relating to these substances and others can be found in Section T2.1 of this workbook.

Table T1.1.5.1 Prominent illegal drugs in Ireland based on FSI records for 2018

	Drug type	Quantity
1	Cannabis herb	1352
2	Cocaine	595
3	Diamorphine	308

4	MDMA	304
5	Cannabis resin	176
6	Alprazolam	159
7	Plant of the genus cannabis	112
8	Zopiclone	72
9	Amphetamine	67
10	Diazepam	62
11	Ketamine	48
12	Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)	25
13	Methylamphetamine	21
14	Phenazepam	20
15	Benzocaine	13
16	Methadone	13
17	Lysergide	11
18	Ethylhexedrone	9
19	Plant material of the genus Cannabis	7
20	Mescaline	5

Source: (personal communication, FSI, 2019)

Drug prices

Table T1.1.5.2 shows drug prices based on the current retail market value of controlled drugs on the retail drug market in October 2018. The prices indicated represent what that substance will sell for on average around the ROI in its lowest denominational street deal. No price change occurred between 2017 and 2018. As stated in previous workbooks, the most credible approach used to set prices on the retail market is via test purchase operations, where gardaí buy drugs in undercover work. The second approach is via intelligence, which is drawn from covert intelligence sources. The third is to evaluate and compare the experiences of drug units nationwide using self-report surveys. Based on all three sources, plus the experience of officers in drug policing, prices are calculated systematically (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2017). This method has illustrated that prices vary at different times; for example, the price of a gram of cannabis in Ennis, Co Clare would be different from the price of a gram purchased in Ballyfermot, Dublin.

Table T1.1.5.2 Drug prices based on current retail market value of controlled drugs, October 2018

Drug	Category	Price per gram/tablet/millilitre
Alprazolam	Benzodiazepine	€2 per tablet
Amphetamine	Phenethylamine	€15 per gram
AM-2201	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
AMT	Tryptamine	€200 per gram
Benzylpiperazine	Piperazine	€5 per tablet/€50 per gram
Butylone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
BKMBDB	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Bromazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Cannabis resin	Cannabis	€6 per gram
Cannabis herb	Cannabis	€20 per gram
Cannabis plants*	Cannabis	€800
Cocaine	Cocaine	€70 per gram
Chlordiazepoxide	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Clobazam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Clonazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
CPP	Piperazine	€5 per tablet/€50 per gram
Diamorphine (heroin)	Opiate	€140 per gram
Dimethylone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Diazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
DMT	Tryptamine	€200 per gram
DMAA	Phenethylamine	€60 per gram
Ethcathinone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Ethylone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Flephedrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Fluorotropacocaine	NPS	€50 per gram
Fluoroamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€15 per gram
Flunitrazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Flurazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
GHB	Solvent	€1 per millilitre
GBL	Solvent	€1 per millilitre
JWH-018	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
JWH-073	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
JWH-250	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram

Ketamine	Hallucinogen	€60 per gram
Khat	Hallucinogen	€0.50 per gram
LSD	Hallucinogen	€10 per tablet
Lysergamide	Hallucinogen	€20 per gram
Lorazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Lormetazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
MAM-2201	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
MBZP	Piperazine	€5 per tablet/€50 per gram
MCPP	Piperazine	€5 per tablet/€50 per gram
MDMA	Phenethylamine	€10 per tablet/€60 per gram
MDEA	Phenethylamine	€10 per tablet/€60 per gram
MDA	Phenethylamine	€10 per tablet/€60 per gram
MDPBP	Cathinone	€50 per gram
MDPV	Cathinone	€50 per gram
MEC	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Methadone	Opiate	€20 per 100 millilitres
Mephedrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Methylone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Methedrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Methylamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€60 per gram
Methoxyamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€60 per gram
Methoxetamine	Hallucinogen	€60 per gram
Methylphenidate	Phenethylamine	€60 per gram
Mirtazapine	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
MMC	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Naphyrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Nitrazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Pentedrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Phentermine	Phenethylamine	€10 per tablet/€60 per gram
Phenazepam (not controlled)	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
PMA	Phenethylamine	€10 per tablet/€60 per gram
PMMA	Phenethylamine	€10 per tablet/€60 per gram
Prazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Psilocin	Hallucinogen	€10 per gram
Psilocybin	Hallucinogen	€10 per gram
PVP	Cathinone	€50 per gram
RCS-4	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
Salvinorin A	Hallucinogen	€20 per gram
STS-135	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
Temazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Triazolam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
UR-144	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
Zolpidem	Sleeping agent	€2 per tablet
Zopiclone (not controlled)	Sleeping agent	€2 per tablet
2C-B	Phenethylamine	€10 per tablet/€60 per gram
2C-E	Phenethylamine	€10 per tablet/€60 per gram
2C-I	Phenethylamine	€10 per tablet/€60 per gram
25I-NBOMe	Hallucinogen	€10 per tablet
5AKB48 (not controlled)	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram

Source: (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2019)

* Cannabis plants are valued based on the potential yield of the plant. An actual market value can only be applied when plants are fully mature and ready for sale. Charges contrary to Section 15A of the Misuse of Drugs Act (as amended) are not applied in relation to nursery plants or plants that are not fully mature.

Purity of drugs seized and pack sizes

Data for pack sizes and purity of drugs seized are obtained from FSI. As mentioned in the Adulterants section, due to operational changes, data are only available for cocaine at this time. The most recent available data are for 2017, when 127 cases were submitted for analysis resulted in 145 analyses (personal communication, FSI, 2019). Cases ranged in pack size:

- 0–25 g (4, 3%)
- 25–100 g (76, 52%)
- 100–500 g (41, 28%)
- >500 g (23, 16%).

Overall, pack sizes ranged from 4.068 g to 5 kg. The sample size analysed is reflective of the total weight of substance received (personal communication, FSI, 2019). The percentage of cocaine purity results ranged from 1% to 88%, with an overall average purity of 48%.

1.2 Drug related crime

1.2.1 Court outcomes for drug offences

Data regarding drug law offences are provided by the Courts Service and the IPS via their annual reports.

Court outcomes for drug offences

The *Courts Service Annual Report 2018* presented statistics on prosecutions for drug offences between January and December 2018 (Courts Service 2019). Notably, data provided are for overall drug law offences. The Courts Service does not distinguish between the different supply offences and possession/use offences (personal communication, Courts Service, 2017).

District Court

In most cases, prosecutions for drug offences are carried out in the District Court, which is the lowest court in the Irish legal system. The District Court, exercising its criminal jurisdiction, deals with four particular types of offences: summary offences, indictable offences tried summarily, some indictable offences, and indictable offences not tried summarily. When the District Court hears a criminal case, the judge sits without a jury. The District Judge decides the issues of fact and whether to convict. He or she also determines the sentence. In the case of most indictable offences which have to be tried by a judge sitting with a jury, the District Court may impose a sentence where the accused pleads guilty, provided that the Director of Public Prosecutions consents, and the judge accepts the guilty plea. Otherwise, the accused is sent forward to the Circuit Court on his signed guilty plea for sentencing. The District Court has a limit on the sentence it may impose in respect of a single criminal charge, which is 12 months' imprisonment (Courts Service 2013). Overall, 17,571 orders were made in relation to drug offences in 2018, which represents a 19% increase since 2018 (n=14,736) and involved 16,505 defendants (see Table T1.2.1.1).

Table T1.2.1.1 Sentences for drug offences in the District Court, 2018

Incoming		Resolved: offences		
Offences	Defendants*	Summary	Indictable dealt with summarily	Sent forward for trial
26563	16505	601	16970	1803

Source: (Courts Service 2019)

* There may be more than one offence brought against a defendant.

Table T1.2.1.2 Summary and indictable offences: outcomes in District Court, 2018

	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp/det	Susp	Other	Fixed	Total
Summary offences: outcomes	22	173	91	71	6	3	11	52	50	31	91	–	601
Indictable offences dealt with summarily: outcomes	279	3726	1855	3035	165	17	325	2123	477	528	4440	–	16970

Note. Dis = Dismiss; S/O = strike out; TIC = taken into consideration; Disq = disqualified; C/S = community service; Prob = probation; Imp/det = imprisonment or detention; Susp = suspended sentence.

Source: (Courts Service 2019)

Juvenile crime

The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years (Section 52 of the Children Act, 2001, as amended by Section 129 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006). Generally, children are aged between 15 and 17 years when they come before the courts. The total number of orders that were made in

respect of drug offences in the Children Court in 2018 was 273 (see Table T1.2.1.3) (Courts Service 2019), which represented a 22% increase since 2017 (n=224).

Table 1.2.1.3 Juvenile crime outcomes in 2018

Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp/det	Susp	Other	Total
21	82	73	10	–	0	–	64	1	1	21	273

Note. Dis = Dismiss; S/O = strike out; TIC = taken into consideration; Disq = disqualified; C/S = community service; Prob = probation; Imp/det = imprisonment or detention; Susp = suspended sentence.
Source: (Courts Service 2019)

Circuit Court

The Circuit Court heard cases for 513 defendants that involved 1,801 drug offences. Out of 1,273 guilty pleas, which represented a 10% increase from 2017 (n=1,158), there were 15 convictions and 22 acquittals (see Table T1.2.1.4). Trials resulted in 247 imprisonments/detentions and 223 suspended sentences (see Table T1.2.1.5) (Courts Service 2019).

Table 1.2.1.4 Sentences for drug offences in the Circuit Court in 2018

Incoming		Resolved: offences						
Offences	Defendants*	Guilty	Trials		NP	TIC	Quash	Dec
			Convicted	Acquitted				
1801	513	1273	15	22	585	209	0	25

Note. Guilty = guilty pleas; NP = nolle prosequi; TIC = taken into consideration; Quash = quash return for trial; Dec = accused deceased.
* There may be more than one offence brought against a defendant.
Source: (Courts Service 2019)

Table 1.2.1.5 Offence outcomes following conviction in the Circuit Court in 2018

Offence outcomes following conviction	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp/det	Susp	Other	Total
	135	5	261	1	20	31	247	223	431	1354

Note. TIC = taken into consideration; Disq = disqualified; C/S = community service; Prob = probation; Imp/det = imprisonment or detention; Susp = suspended sentence.
Source: (Courts Service 2019)

Appeals (from District Court)

In 2018, 362 appeals, representing 668 offences from the District Court, were dealt with in the Circuit Court (Courts Service 2019). This represented an increase of 26% since 2016 (appeals=288; offences=548). Table T1.2.1.6 shows a breakdown of resolved offences.

Table 1.2.1.6 Appeals from District Court, 2018

Incoming		Resolved: offences				
Off	Def	Aff	Varied	Rev	S/O	S/O N/A
668	362	279	721	152	218	211

Note. Off = offences; Def = defendants; Aff = affirmed; Rev = reversed; S/O = struck out; S/O N/A = struck out no appearance.
Source: (Courts Service 2019)

Court of Appeal

Overall, the number of appeals that were lodged from the Circuit Criminal Court for drug/misuse of drugs offences increased between 2017 (n=32) and 2018 (n=61) by 91%. Overall 55 appeals were resolved in 2018, of which 52 originated in the Circuit Criminal Court and three originated in the Special Criminal Court. This was 53% higher than the number resolved in 2017 (n=36) (Courts

Service 2019). Table T1.2.1.7 indicates that the majority of appeals resolved were for sentence severity (n=40) followed by sentence leniency (n=7) and conviction (n=7).

Table T1.2.1.7 Summary of resolved appeals in 2018

Appeal Resolved	Conviction	Sentence (severity)	Conviction and sentence	Sentence (leniency)	DPP (dismissal)	MC	Other	Total
	7	40	1	7	0	0	0	55

Note. MC = miscarriage of justice.

Source: (Courts Service 2019)

Prison committals for drug offences

The IPS Annual Report 2018 provided statistics on the number of persons in custody under sentence (i.e. not on remand) on a given day in the year (30 November) and also on the number of committals under sentence, by sentence length (Irish Prison Service 2019). On 30 November 2018, the number of persons in custody for controlled drug offences comprised 12% (n=371/3,171) of the total prison population. This figure represented a slight increase of 0.09% since 2017 (n=347/2,990). Of those in custody for drug offences, 155 were under a sentence of five years or longer; of these, 45 were under a sentence of 10 years or longer. Twenty-eight prisoners were under a sentence of 12 months or less (Irish Prison Service 2019).

Between 2017 and 2018, the number of committals for drug offences increased by 6%, which was in contrast to the substantial decrease evident between 2016 and 2017 (44%, n=300). Of the 394 committals to prison during 2018, 36 (9%) were for sentences of three months or less (Irish Prison Service 2019). Further information on prisons can be found in Section T1.2.1. of the Prison workbook

1.3 Drug supply reduction activities

1.3.1 Drug supply reduction

a) Key priorities of supply reduction

Four documents illustrate the importance of the law enforcement response to drug trafficking in Ireland: the *An Garda Síochána Mission and Strategy 2019-2021*, *An Garda Síochána 2019 Policing Plan*, *An Garda Síochána Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2017*, and the national drugs strategy, *Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery: A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017–2025*, which commenced in 2017 (Department of Health 2017).

An Garda Síochána crime prevention and reduction strategy

The *Strategy Statement 2019–2021* was published on July 17, 2019 (An Garda Síochána 2019b). The AGS mission for the duration of the strategy is simply “Keeping People Safe” (p.3). Progress through this strategy will be achieved incrementally by implementing various initiatives through the policing plans annually. The areas that the strategy focuses on are:

- community policing
- protecting people
- a secure state
- a human rights foundation
- our people – our greatest resource
- transforming our services

Initiatives related to these areas will be highlighted in the next section.

An Garda Síochána 2019 Policing Plan

An Garda Síochána 2019 Policing Plan was launched in July 2019 and identifies the main policing concerns for 2019 as prioritised by AGS (An Garda Síochána Strategic Planning Unit). It is the first of three plans proposed by the new Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris, that will implement the new *AGS Strategy Statement July 2019–2021* through numerous initiatives which will gradually assist AGS to reach its strategic outcomes (An Garda Síochána 2019b). Six areas have been highlighted by AGS in 2019:

- *Community policing*, which includes introducing a new community policing framework in four divisions in 2019. The locations of the first five divisions to implement this framework was announced on October 10, 2019; these cover Galway, Cork city, Dublin South Central, Meath/Westmeath, and Limerick. AGS also intends to interact and collaborate with communities and stakeholders to determine what their policing needs are and how to achieve them
- *Protecting people*, which includes building AGS capacity to oversee and coordinate how AGS responds to crime. The intention is to build crime prevention capacity to reduce crime and the fear of crime. In addition, AGS aims to target organised crime groups that hurt communities via violence and selling/supplying drugs. Moreover, it plans to improve the investigative response to crime by implementing the Investigation Management System and other ICTs.
- *A secure Ireland*, which involves improving security capabilities by implementing recommendations put forward in *A Policing Service for the Future*. For example, AGS intends to carry out intelligence-led operations nationally and internationally to address terrorism. Gardaí will receive specialised training in accordance with international best practice to help them locate and seize finances used for this purpose
- *Human rights foundation*, which includes building a policing infrastructure that is centred on human rights. AGS aims to embed human rights and ethical behaviour into how gardaí police, and specifically how they deal with criminal service users who are vulnerable
- *Our people*, which is viewed as AGS's greatest resource. AGS aims to increase engagement and support and provide opportunities for continuous development. The new People Strategy 2019–2021 will be implemented and will help determine whether gardaí are in the role most suited to them, in the right place and time. In addition, it is intended to establish a learning culture and to increase leadership capacity via leadership training. Excellent performance will be encouraged and acknowledged. Underperformance and unethical behaviour will be targeted. To support health and wellness, AGS will invest in employees' well-being
- *Service transformation*, which includes the implementation of a new operational model. The aim is to provide a more effective service, build public confidence via greater accountability and transparency, and improve communication both internally and externally. In addition, AGS plans to re-establish confidence in crime data by working with the CSO, and by ensuring greater accuracy and governance.

Although drugs are only mentioned by name in the 'Protecting people' section, it is implied throughout the document (An Garda Síochána Strategic Planning Unit). Responsibility for actioning and reporting on the progress of each initiative in the plan has been assigned to an Assistant Commissioner or Executive Director, who will then report to the Commissioner and the Policing Authority once a month. Moreover, key performance indicators will be used to statistically determine that improvement has occurred in several areas, such as public perception, public safety and demand, offender accountability, roads policing, victim engagement, and data quality-related (An Garda Síochána Strategic Planning Unit).

The Commissioner believes that this plan is ‘ambitious’, but he is “committed to delivering a victim-centred policing service, focused on keeping people safe, protecting the most vulnerable and providing a consistently high standard of service” (p.2). In addition, Commissioner Harris is committed to “holding the organisation to account for our performance against this plan. This development of a strong performance culture will be key to ensuring the long-term delivery of progressive organisational change and professional victim-focused services (p.2) (An Garda Síochána Strategic Planning Unit).

An Garda Síochána crime prevention and reduction strategy

As stated in previous Drug market and crime workbooks, the 2017 *Garda Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy* (An Garda Síochána 2017) draws on UN guidelines (United Nations Economic and Social Council 2002) and complements the policing and security sections of the *Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016–2021* (An Garda Síochána 2015). The strategy is underpinned by a problem-solving approach that is based on a strong evidence base. The National Crime Prevention Unit and Divisional Crime Prevention Officers are critical to its successful implementation in Ireland. The strategy is centred on four pillars:

- building strategic crime prevention capacity
- operating a professional crime prevention service via partnership and collaboration with communities
- implementing customised crime prevention approaches with communities
- communicating crime prevention messages to the public.

Reducing harm, supporting recovery: A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017–2025

As stated in the Drugs and crime workbook, National Report 2017, the new strategy (Department of Health 2017), aimed at providing an integrated public health approach to drug and alcohol use by focusing on the promotion of healthier lifestyles within society, was launched in 2017. It consists of five goals and aims to target a 50-point action plan from 2017 to 2025. Goal 3 sets out key actions for supply reduction:

- provide a comprehensive and responsive misuse of drugs control framework which ensures the proper control, management and regulation of the supply of drugs
- implement effective law enforcement and supply reduction strategies and actions to prevent, disrupt, or otherwise reduce the availability of illegal drugs
- develop effective monitoring of, and responses to, evolving trends, public health threats and the emergence of new drug markets.

Further information on this strategy can be found in Section T1.1 of the *Policy workbook* and in Section T4.2 of the Drug market and crime workbook 2017 (Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction 2018a).

b) Areas of activity of supply reduction

As stated in previous workbooks, the following account describes the range of operations in the areas of drug interdiction, organised crime, policing communities, and reducing reoffending. The account is drawn from information published in the reporting period (August 2014 to September 2019) on the websites and in the annual reports of the key agencies involved in supply reduction activities, and in responses to Parliamentary Questions.

Drug interdiction

The Revenue Commissioners' Operational Intelligence Unit¹ gathers data with a view to identifying possible drug smuggling routes into Ireland via passenger and cargo traffic; analysing the movement of persons and goods on those routes; and profiling, targeting and routine surveillance of suspect persons or consignments. Many drug seizures result from profiling techniques based on risk analysis. The Operational Intelligence Unit transmits intelligence and details of suspect traffic to the local operational units, whose functions include the examination of suspect passengers' baggage and freight consignments; the search of suspect persons, vehicles, vessels, pleasure craft, aircraft, etc.; and the transmission of information to the Operational Intelligence Unit for further action.

The Revenue Commissioners' Maritime Unit, based in Cork, is equipped with rigid inflatable boats and two Revenue Commissioners Customs cutters tasked with the prevention, detection, interception and seizure of controlled drugs, fiscal goods, arms/ammunition/explosives, and prohibited and restricted goods smuggled or illegally imported into, or intended to be exported out of, Ireland or the EU. When not engaged in operational duties, Maritime Unit personnel are involved in coastal intelligence work.

Drug detector dog units form an important component of policing in Ireland. Detector dogs are trained to locate cocaine, cannabis, ecstasy, heroin and other tobacco products, and cash. Units are based at strategic locations, including ports and airports around Ireland, by the Revenue Commissioners Customs Service. Currently, 18 detector dogs are operational (personal communication, Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2019). For operational and security reasons, performance statistics are not provided out of respect for individual detector dogs.

Similarly, Garda Dog Units have been providing an operational support service for approximately 58 years. One unit is mainly based at Kilmainham Garda Station in Dublin, while another is located in the Southern Region. The Garda Dog Unit was involved in approximately 472 searches in 2017 (An Garda Síochána 2018). These included searches for missing persons, drugs, firearms and explosive substances, and stolen goods (An Garda Síochána 2018). There is no new data available at this time.

The Customs Drugs Watch Programme, launched by the Revenue Commissioners in 1994, encourages those living in coastal communities, maritime personnel, and people living near airfields to report unusual occurrences to the Customs Service via a confidential 24/7 drugs watch freephone facility.

The Revenue Commissioners' mobile X-ray scanner, which was launched in June 2017, was partially funded by a grant from OLAF, the European Anti-Fraud Office, under its Hercule III Programme. The mobile X-ray is the latest tool used by the Revenue Commissioners in the fight against smuggling. It is viewed as the most advanced on the market and avails of imaging technology to analyse vehicles as well as shipping containers. It is deployed in Dublin Port (Revenue Commissioners 2018).

Drug-related cash seizures are undertaken by the Customs Service under Section 38 of the Criminal Justice Act, 1994, as amended by Section 20 of the Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Act 2005 (see Section T1.1.4 of the Legal workbook). As stated in the Drug market and crime workbook, National Report 2018, the majority of drug-related cash seizures are carried out when attempts are made to export from Ireland, but increasingly, seizures are also being made at the point of import and inland. These seizures continue to have a major impact on the activities of both national and international drug traffickers. Investigations are carried out throughout the EU and worldwide

¹ Downloaded from: <http://www.revenue.ie/en/customs/customs-drugs-watch-law-enforcement.html>

following a drug-related cash seizure. Cash forfeited under this Act is transferred for the benefit of the Exchequer.

Organised crime

As stated in the Drug market and crime workbook, National Report 2018, regional, national and international organised crime and drug trafficking investigations are managed by the GNDOCB, which was established by AGS in 2015. It aims to disrupt, dismantle and prosecute groups and individuals involved in serious organised criminal activity. A multidisciplinary approach is viewed as essential in order to target OCGs effectively via legislation such as the Proceeds of Crime Act, 1996 as amended in 2005 and 2016 (see section 2.1 of the Legal workbook) and the powers of the CAB (Fitzgerald 2017, 30 March)

Moreover, numerous strategic partnerships are in place both nationally and internationally, and include the Revenue Commissioners Customs Service, the HPRA, the Irish Naval Service, Europol, INTERPOL, and MAOC-N in Lisbon (Fitzgerald F 2016, 20 July).

Cross-border cooperation continues between AGS and the PSNI. Collaborations include the most recent policing strategy which looked at operations, rural policing, community relations, intelligence sharing, information and communications technology, service improvement, and emergency planning; this will allow drugs, organised crime and a range of other crimes to be tackled (An Garda Síochána and Police Service of Northern Ireland 2016).

In addition, representatives from law enforcement agencies in Ireland and Northern Ireland come together annually at the Cross-Border Conference on Organised Crime. The most recent two-day event took place in November 2018 and was centred around the theme 'Shared problems, shared solutions' (Department of Justice 2018, 7 November). The conference is considered an essential and indispensable forum that enables discussion and information exchange between the law enforcement agencies, which ultimately keeps communities safe north and south of the Border (Department of Justice 2018, 7 November). It provides an opportunity to examine and address current crime trends while at the same time affording an opportunity to build on operational actions that have been carried out already (Department of Justice 2018, 7 November). Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris, stated that:

"The Cross-Border Conference on Organised Crime is a real demonstration of the strong working relationship between AGS, the PSNI and our law enforcement partners...As we face the challenges of Brexit and ever-evolving criminality, strong and effective partnerships will be even more critical in providing a safe and secure society for everyone on the island of Ireland." (Department of Justice 2018, 7 November).

Policing communities

Drug-related crime in the form of gangland violence has become a serious problem in Dublin as a result of the ongoing feud between the Hutch and Kinahan criminal gangs, which are well known for robbery/burglary and for drug dealing, respectively. The GNDOCB is of the opinion that all associated killings are drug related, as they all stemmed from disagreements and revenge in relation to the illegal drug enterprise (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2018). The response established by AGS to this feud is coordinated under Operation Hybrid and is reviewed on a weekly basis in order to maintain optimal impact. In addition, support is provided by Armed Support Units, which form part of the Special Tactics and Operations Command (STOC) (An Garda Síochána 2018). Please see Section T1.2.2 for the most recent figures available in relation to Operation Hybrid.

Drug-related intimidation and violence is an area of major concern for Irish communities and it has been shown to affect the physical, mental and emotional well-being of victims (Connolly and Buckley 2016). Further details on this study can be found in Section T1.3.1 of the Drug market and crime workbook, National Report 2016 (Health Research Board. Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction 2017).

The national Drug-Related Intimidation Reporting Programme was developed by AGS with the aim of addressing the needs of drug users and family members who are subjected to drug-related intimidation. This programme fulfils criteria put forward in the most recent national drugs strategy 2017–2025 in Goal 4, Objective 4.1: ‘Strengthen the resilience of communities and build their capacity to respond’ (p.63) (Department of Health 2017) see Policy workbook, National Report 2017 (Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction 2018b).

As stated in previous workbooks, primary responsibility for responding to the issue of drug-related intimidation has been given to one Inspector in every Garda division. Inspectors are at management level and are chosen by the Garda Commissioner for their expertise, knowledge and extensive experience. They liaise directly with their local Superintendent in relation to each individual case. Anyone requiring help from an Inspector in their local area can make contact to arrange a formal or informal meeting. AGS is the lead agency working alongside the National Family Support Network (NFSN). Additional details of the operation of this programme are provided on the websites of both AGS and the NFSN at www.garda.ie and www.fsn.ie.

Reducing reoffending

As stated in previous workbooks, reducing reoffending is addressed via several agencies, such as the Irish Youth Justice Service, the IPS, AGS, and the Probation Service.

Work on the new Youth Justice Strategy started in 2019. As part of the previous youth strategy, *Youth Justice Action Plan 2014–2018*, Goal 3 aimed to review and strengthen targeted interventions to reduce offending. In addition, as part of Goal 2, Objective 9 aimed to ‘profile substance misuse among young people subject to community sanctions/probation service supervision’ (Irish Youth Justice Service 2014). The most recent progress report for 2016, published in December 2017, showed that further progress had been made in the implementation of actions that were set out in the action plan (Department of Justice and Equality 2017). In addition, the Probation Service aims to reduce the likelihood of reoffending by promoting positive change in behaviour and enabling reintegration into society. To achieve these goals, it avails of high-quality assessment and effective supervision (Probation Service 2018).

c) Organisational structures/coordinating bodies

As reported in previous workbooks, responsibility for the prevention of drug trafficking rests primarily with the Revenue Commissioners Customs Division, whereas responsibility for the prevention of drug-related crime within Ireland rests primarily with AGS. In addition to the exchange of information between the Office of Customs Drugs Law Enforcement Head and the GNDOCB, which is part of AGS, nationwide liaison also takes place at local level between nominated Customs officers and Garda officers. Other State agencies engaged in supporting supply reduction activities include the CAB and FSI. The Naval Service and the Air Corps cooperate with the Revenue Commissioners Customs Division and AGS, when called upon, through the Joint Task Force on Drugs Interdiction.

The Revenue Commissioners Office of Customs Drugs Law Enforcement, Investigations and Prosecutions Division²

² Information downloaded on 14 October 2019 from <http://www.revenue.ie/en/customs/customs-drugs-watch-law-enforcement.html>

Revenue Commissioners Customs officers have primary responsibility for the prevention, detection, interception and seizure of controlled drugs being smuggled into or out of Ireland. All strategic management functions relating to drugs issues are attached to the Investigations and Prosecutions Division (personal communication, Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2019), and include:

- gathering national and international intelligence and the dissemination of this intelligence as necessary. Risk analysis is carried out by the National Freight Intelligence Unit (NFIU), which was established in 1999 to collect, analyse, enhance and disseminate freight intelligence nationally. It targets smuggled goods that are transported by sea. It has access to Revenue Commissioners and EU databases and various other sources of information.
- participation in the National Inter-Agency Drugs Joint Task Force, comprising the Revenue Commissioners Customs Division, AGS, and the Naval Service. Information is also exchanged between Customs Drugs Law Enforcement and the GNDOCB.
- analysis of national and international drug smuggling trends.
- research, planning and organisation of both national and international operations targeting drug smuggling and related issues.
- liaison with other national and international enforcement agencies and government bodies, as well as the organisation of, and participation in, operations at both national and international level, including joint interagency operations.
- participation in the International Liaison Network; five officers from the Investigations and Prosecutions Division are currently assigned abroad and are directly involved in the international exchange of information and intelligence. Officers are assigned to Permanent Representation in Brussels (2), the Irish Embassy (1), Europol (1), and the MAOC-N based in Lisbon (1).
- management of the Revenue Commissioners Customs Division, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) initiative, which is a programme of cooperation between the Revenue Commissioners Customs Division and the business community on the prevention of smuggling, in particular drug smuggling. The Revenue Commissioners Customs Division has established working links with thousands of diverse companies, ranging from airlines, air express couriers and shipping companies to airport and harbour authorities, freight forwarders, exporters, road hauliers, chemical companies, and yachtmen. The MOU initiative delivers training to company staff by Customs liaison officers in order to heighten drug smuggling awareness, and practical advice is offered in order to help prevent vehicles from being used to smuggle drugs and other contraband goods. In addition, company staff are provided with ready channels of communication to the Revenue Commissioners Customs Division.
- management of the Customs Drugs Watch Programme. The Revenue Commissioners Customs Division is responsible for monitoring 3,000 km of coastline, and therefore help from individuals living in coastal communities, maritime personnel and yachting networks is vital. A *Customs Drugs Watch* guide has been published which provides guidance on how people can help.³
- management of the Drug Precursor Programme, which is a mechanism for cooperation between the Revenue Commissioners Customs Division and the chemical industry, and was set up in order to detect the diversion of chemicals for illicit purposes. The Programme is designed to increase the awareness of Customs officers and members of the chemical trade to the possibility of legitimate chemicals being diverted to the manufacture of illegal drugs. As part of this programme, the Customs Service now has dedicated Precursor Liaison Officers located in key areas around Ireland. These officers have been trained in the

³ The *Customs Drugs Watch* guide is available at <http://www.revenue.ie/en/corporate/documents/customs-drug-watch.pdf>

identification and handling of chemicals, and are tasked with liaising with members of the chemical trade for the purpose of identifying suspicious activity.

- management of the Revenue Commissioners Customs Division; 18 detector dog teams located nationwide are operational (personal communication, Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2019).

2018: National and International Level Overview

In 2018, Revenue Commissioners worked closely with other agencies internationally and in the State, including AGS, Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB), the Defence Forces, the Naval Service, and the HPRA, sharing operational/intelligence support, in acting against the illegal drugs trade.

RCDLE were involved in joint national operations with AGS, in particular, the GNDOCB, which resulted in the seizure of both cannabis and cocaine. In 2018, this resulted in Revenue evaluating 354 joint controlled delivery operations involving Revenue's Customs Service, AGS, and/or the HPRA, compared with 313 joint controlled deliveries evaluated in 2017. Arising from these evaluations, Revenue participated in 61 joint controlled deliveries in 2018, compared to 41 in 2017 (personal communication, Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2019). In addition, they coordinated enforcement and interception of illegal goods on behalf of the HPRA and participated in the Oversight Forum on Drugs run by the Department of Health, which is responsible for implementing Ireland's national drugs strategy (Revenue Commissioners 2019).

In 2018, Revenue continued its engagement at an international level with the EU Customs Cooperative Working Party, WCO, Europol, and the EMPACT and MAOC-N in on-going actions aimed at intercepting and preventing the trafficking of drugs, illicit medicines, NPS and drug precursors. Operations including:

- Operation PANGEA XI, which is an international WCO/INTERPOL operation targeting trade in illicit/counterfeit medicines and internet pharmacies.
- Operation Brooklyn, which focuses on the smuggling of drugs into the jurisdiction.
- Operation Viper, which involves cross border cooperation that resulted in the seizure of 7.5Kg Heroin.

Additionally, during 2018 Revenue participated in a range of fora related to organised crime and drug smuggling (personal communication, Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2019)

An Garda Síochána

As reported in previous workbooks, supply reduction activity ranges from participation in international and cross-border operations to street-level policing of supply and possession offences, and undercover operations targeting specific individuals or groups, or targeting specific locations, such as nightclubs, where drugs are consumed.

The GNDOCB manages regional, national and international drug trafficking and organised crime investigations. The main areas focused on are crime detection, supply reduction, harm prevention, demand reduction and supporting recovery (An Garda Síochána 2019a). It aims to disrupt, dismantle and prosecute groups and individuals involved in serious organised criminal activity using intelligence-led investigations (An Garda Síochána 2019a) It is also one of the lead agencies involved in implementing the current national drugs strategy. It is responsible for putting initiatives and policies in place that enable government strategies to lower the demand for drugs and decrease harms linked with its misuse (An Garda Síochána 2019a)

Additionally, AGS was allocated €1.882 billion in the Government's 2020 Budget, an increase of 7% from 2019; €95 million will be set aside for overtime in order to facilitate the continuation of large-scale policing operations (Flanagan 2019, 9 October).

Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB)

As reported in previous National Reports, the CAB's statutory remit under the Criminal Assets Bureau Acts 1996 and 2005, the Proceeds of Crime Act, 1996, as amended by the 2005 and 2016 (Amendment) Act and also in social welfare and revenue legislation, is to carry out investigations into the suspected proceeds of criminal conduct. The CAB uses a multi-agency, multidisciplinary partnership approach in its investigations into the suspected proceeds of criminal conduct. CAB staff are drawn from AGS, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners (including Customs), the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, and the Department of Justice and Equality. The CAB also works closely with international crime investigation agencies and has successfully targeted proceeds of foreign criminality.

The CAB supports the roll-out of the Garda Divisional Profiler programme by providing lectures, training and expertise, with particular reference to targeting middle-ranking drug dealers and others benefiting by deriving assets from criminal activity. In turn, the CAB receives intelligence, information and evidence from profilers.

In order to continue to identify and trace assets which are the proceeds of crime, and to present testimony before the courts, the CAB has established the Bureau Analysis Unit, adopted international best practices in the area of forensic analysis, and has also adopted the use of enhanced training. Through making earlier or preliminary applications relating to lower-value assets, the CAB has begun to target more middle-ranking criminals. While this approach may not realise extensive financial returns, it demonstrates the CAB's ability to react to local community concerns.

Forensic Science Ireland (FSI)

As reported in previous National Reports, the Drugs section of FSI (formerly known as the Forensic Science Laboratory) examines and analyses substances seized by AGS or Revenue Commissioners Customs officers, and sometimes the Military Police, that are thought to contravene the Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977-2017. As shown in Section T2.1 of this workbook, the most common drugs encountered in the FSI laboratory were cannabis herb, followed by cocaine, heroin, MDMA, cannabis resin and alprazolam. Moreover, the increase in NPS-type drugs and further changes to drugs legislation have led to an exponential increase in the variety of compounds submitted to the laboratory for analysis. As a result, hundreds of different compounds can be analysed by staff on an annual basis. Items that possibly come into contact with such substances – for example, weighing scales, knives, and equipment from clandestine laboratories – may also be examined in order to determine whether traces of a controlled substance are present. A number of analytical procedures are used in the laboratory in order to determine whether a substance is a controlled drug, the most common of which is gas chromatography coupled with mass spectrometry (GC/MS). The results of the analysis are issued with a certificate of analysis that is presented as evidence in court.

Joint Task Force on Drugs Interdiction (JTF)

As reported in previous National Reports, the Joint Task Force on Drugs Interdiction (JTF) was established in 1993 as a Government measure to improve law enforcement in relation to drug trafficking at sea. The JTF comprises members of AGS, the Revenue Commissioners, and the Naval Service (Department of Defence 2015). The JTF is convened whenever AGS and the Revenue Commissioners, which have primary responsibility in this area, review intelligence received and consider that a joint operation with the Naval Service and/or the Air Corps should be mounted. The Naval Service is legally empowered under the Criminal Justice Act, 1994 (as amended by the Criminal Justice (Illicit Traffic by Sea) Act 2003) to engage in drug interdiction operations. The Air Corps provides air support if required and, on occasion, may be requested to carry members of the Revenue Commissioners in an observational capacity for the purposes of

monitoring vessels suspected of drug trafficking. The Air Corps provides an important intelligence gathering capability when requested by the JTF. Intelligence for drug interdiction operations is provided by AGS and the Revenue Commissioners and via the international intelligence centre MAOC-N (Department of Defence 2015).

2. Trends

2.1 Short term trends (5 years)

Seizures

The number of drug seizures in any given period can be affected by such factors as law enforcement resources, strategies and priorities, and by the vulnerability of traffickers to law enforcement activities. However, drug seizures are considered indirect indicators of the supply and availability of drugs (see Standard Table T13). Data for drug seizures are recorded independently by both the Revenue Commissioners Customs Division and AGS, and each will be presented separately below.

Revenue Commissioners Customs Division seizures

Information regarding all Revenue Customs seizures, including Revenue Customs drugs seizures, are held in the Revenue National Seizure Register on C-NET, which is a secure networked intelligence system. Only Revenue Commissioners seizures are recorded on register. As set out in Table 18 in the Revenue Commissioners Annual Report 2018, drugs seizures are recorded by product type:

- cannabis (herbal and resin)
- cocaine and heroin
- amphetamines, ecstasy, and other (Revenue Commissioners 2019).

No further category breakdown is available. When a prosecution is pending, or presumptive field tests are not available, only samples are sent to FSI for analysis (personal communication, Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2017)

Drug interceptions by the Revenue Commissioners and joint operations in 2018 resulted in 7,174 seizures (1,988 kg), which was estimated to be valued at €33.48 million. The number of seizures for cocaine and heroin intercepted in 2018 (153) was higher than those intercepted in 2017 (136). The overall weight of the seizures was estimated at 195 kg and had a value of €16.69 million. These estimates were substantially higher than 2017 figures (27 kg; €2.23 million) (Revenue Commissioners 2019). In 2018, a total of 1,386 kg of cannabis (herbal and resin) with an estimated value of €9.14 million was intercepted in 1,386 separate seizures (Revenue Commissioners 2019). The highest number of seizures reported by Customs officers was for amphetamines, ecstasy and other types of drugs (7,174). The estimated weight of these substances was 1,281 kg and had a value of €7.65 million.

An Garda Síochána seizures

Only drugs seized by AGS for supply offences are sent to FSI for analysis. Figure T2.1.1 shows trends for total seizures and cannabis-related seizures between 2003 and 2018 (personal communication, FSI, 2019).

All drug seizures

The total number of drug seizures analysed by FSI increased from 5,299 in 2004 to a peak of 10,444 in 2007. Between 2008 and 2010, the number almost halved to 5,477. This decrease was followed by a slight increase in 2011 (6,014). An annual decrease was shown between 2011 and 2015, with the 2015 figure showing the lowest number of seizures in a 12-year period. Following an increase of 52% (1,814) between 2015 and 2016, a slight decrease occurred in 2017 (2%). Between 2017 (5,199) and 2018 (3,630), FSI analyses decreased by 30%.

Cannabis

Cannabis seizures account for the largest proportion of all drugs seized (46%), as Figure T2.1.1 illustrates. Following a slight decrease between 2003 and 2004, seizures of cannabis-related substances increased from 2005 to reach a peak in 2008. Between 2008 and 2010, the number of such seizures decreased by approximately 60%. Although there was a 38% spike in seizures in 2011, an annual decreasing trend was evident between 2011 and 2015; 2015 figures were approximately 55% lower than those reported in 2011. One possible explanation for this outcome is that gardaí have targeted the cannabis cultivation industry in numerous operations in recent years. Between 2015 and 2017, an increasing trend was evident. However, since between 2017 and 2018, FSI analyses of cannabis products have reduced by 21%.

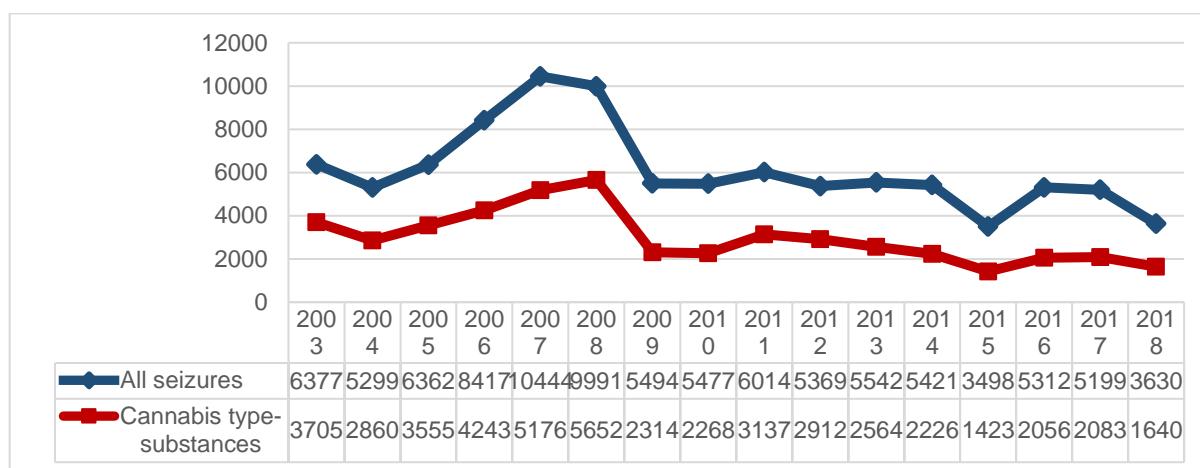


Figure T2.1.1 Trends in the total number of drug seizures and cannabis seizures, 2003–2018

Source: (personal communication, FSI 2003–2019)

An examination of cannabis substances by type is shown in Figure T2.1.2. Cannabis herb has been shown to be the most prominent drug seized in Ireland since 2010. Mainly between 2011 and 2015, the numbers of cannabis herb, cannabis resin and cannabis plants seizures have decreased. However, between 2015 and 2016, analyses of cannabis herb and resin increased. Between decreasing trends were shown for the three main cannabis products analysed: herb, resin, and plants.

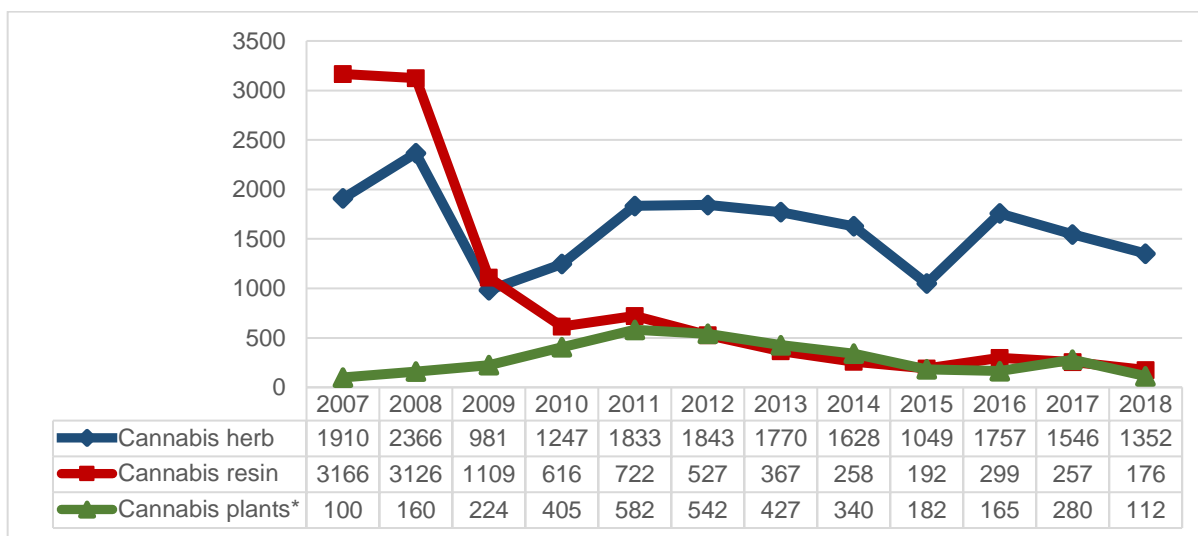


Figure T2.1.2 Trends in the total number of drug seizures by cannabis type, 2007–2018

Source: (personal communication, FSI 2007–2019)

As can be seen in Figure T2.1.3, percentage increases/decreases between 2011 and 2015 follow a similar trajectory as the total number of cannabis seizures. However, overall seizures showed a 52% increase between 2015 and 2016. Similarly, seizures of cannabis herb and resin increased by 67% and 56%, respectively. In contrast, this analysis shows that seizures of cannabis plants decreased by 9% between 2015 and 2016. A different picture emerged in 2017; overall, there was a slight decrease in the analyses of cannabis-type seizures (-2%). Similarly, the analysis by type indicates that seizures of cannabis herb and resin decreased by 12% and 14%, respectively. In contrast, a substantial increase (70%) was evident for seizures of cannabis plants. As stated previously, possible explanations for this outcome is that operations by Irish law enforcement agencies have focused specifically on addressing the problem, resulting in arrests and convictions (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2016). However, it is also important to note that while the number of cannabis plants analysed is lower than cannabis herb and cannabis resin, this is not a true reflection of how many cannabis plants are seized in Ireland each year, as only a sample of overall cannabis plant seizures are sent to FSI for analysis. Therefore, this outcome should be interpreted with caution. While a 30% percentage decrease was evident for the main cannabis products overall in 2018, cannabis plants and resin products accounted for the largest part of this decrease.

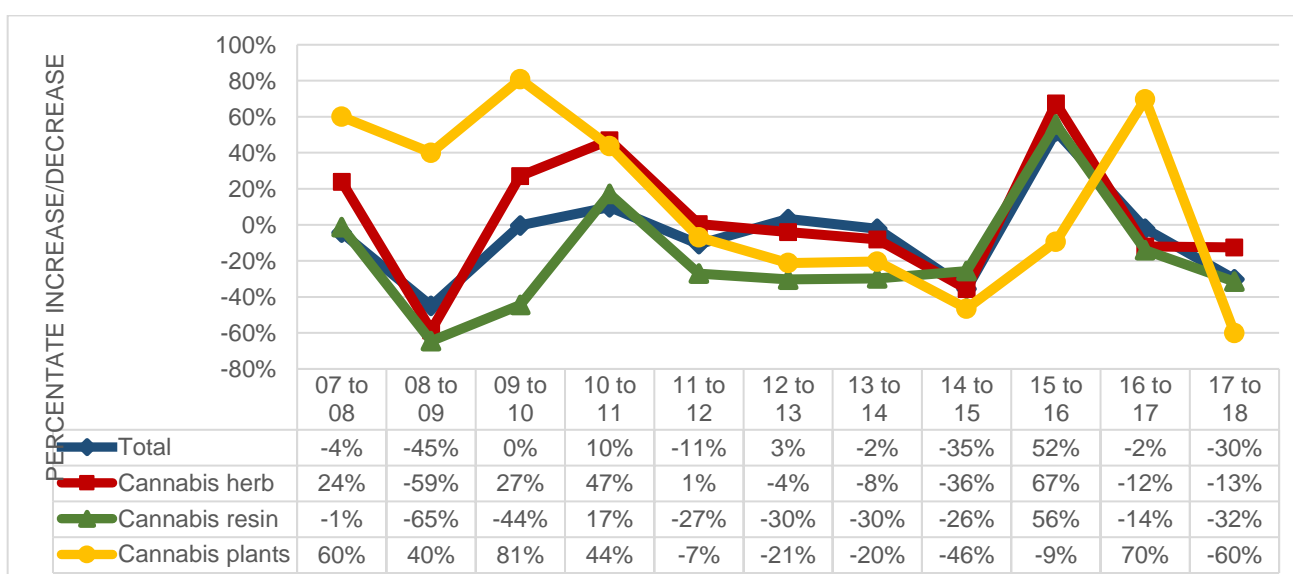


Figure T2.1.3 Comparison of percentage increase/decrease for cannabis-type products by cannabis type, 2008–2018

Source: (personal communication, FSI 2008-2019)

In 2018, other types of cannabis products were seized and submitted for analysis. Table T2.1.1 shows that tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) was detected in 26 seizures. THC was also detected with other commercial products (2). Cannabis oil (cannabidiol) was found in two seizures and indicated in two more. According to FSI, 'indicated' generally means not controlled in Ireland. However, it may also mean that there was an insufficient amount of material present for analysis (personal communication, FSI, 2019). Cannabinol was reported once and cannabis trace was found in one other.

Other controlled drugs

Opioids

Heroin: Figure T2.1.4 shows trends for seizures of heroin between 2003 and 2017. From 2004, the number of heroin seizures analysed increased, reaching a peak in 2007 (1,698). Although heroin seizures subsequently decreased almost every year between 2007 and 2013, a substantial increase occurred between 2013 and 2014 (38%). Although an increase was evident in 2016 (35%), decreases were shown in 2014/2015 (-21%) and 2016/2017 (-25%), and an even larger decrease was shown between 2017 and 2018 (-60%).

In addition, FSI analysis determined that traces of diamorphine were present in five seizures (see Figure T2.1.4).

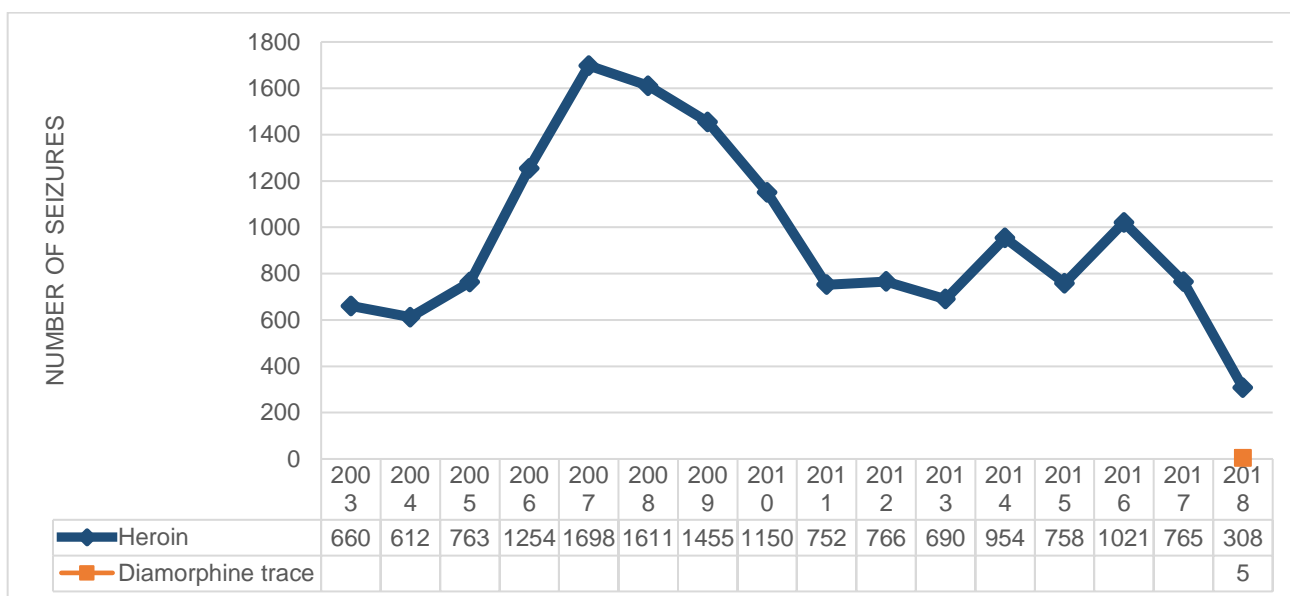


Figure T2.1.4 Trends in the number of heroin seizures, 2003–2018

Source: (personal communication, FSI, 2003–2019)

Other opioids: Figure T2.1.5 shows trends in the number of other opioids seized between 2012 and 2018. Following a peak in 2014, the number of seizures of drugs in this category continued to decline year on year, with the number of seizures in 2018 being approximately 77% lower than in 2014. Further analysis indicated that methadone was the most prominent drug in this category, accounting for between 66% and 86% of analyses between 2012 and 2017 (see Figure T2.1.5). There was only one report of codeine and one report of buprenorphine in 2018. Although Tramadol was not reported in 2018, an analysis of one seizure indicated that Tramadol was present.

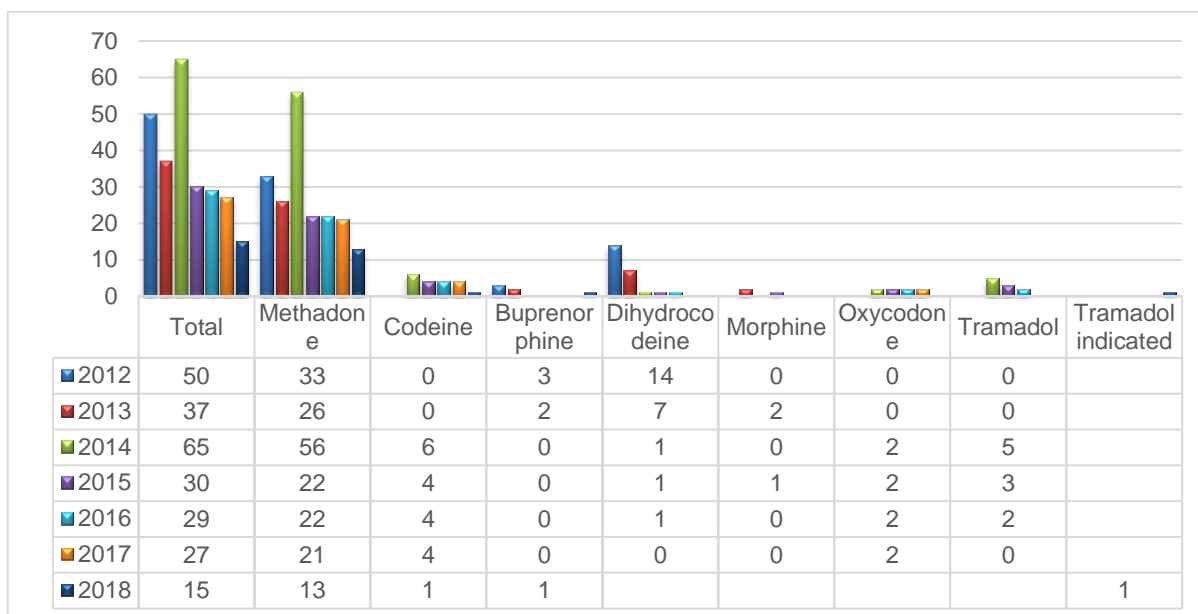


Figure T2.1.5 Trends in the number of seizures of other opioids, 2012–2018

Source: (personal communication, FSI, 2012–2019)

Cocaine: Figure T2.1.6 shows the trends for cocaine seizures between 2003 and 2017. Generally, except for a 10% spike between 2013 and 2014, the number of cocaine seizures has decreased from a peak of 1,749 in 2007 to 364 in 2015. One possible explanation for this is that the economy in Ireland was not doing well in 2013 and 2014; another possibility is that the market would have been affected by the availability of cheaper white powders that mimic the effects of cocaine (personal communication, GNDOCB, 2016). Although an increase in cocaine analyses was seen in 2016 (63%) and 2017 (33%), this trend was not seen in 2018. Moreover, between 2017 and 2018, there was a 25% decrease in cocaine seizures.

In addition, FSI detected traces of cocaine (13) and powdered plant material containing cocaine (1) in other analyses. Cocaine was also found along with amphetamine (1) and MDMA (1).

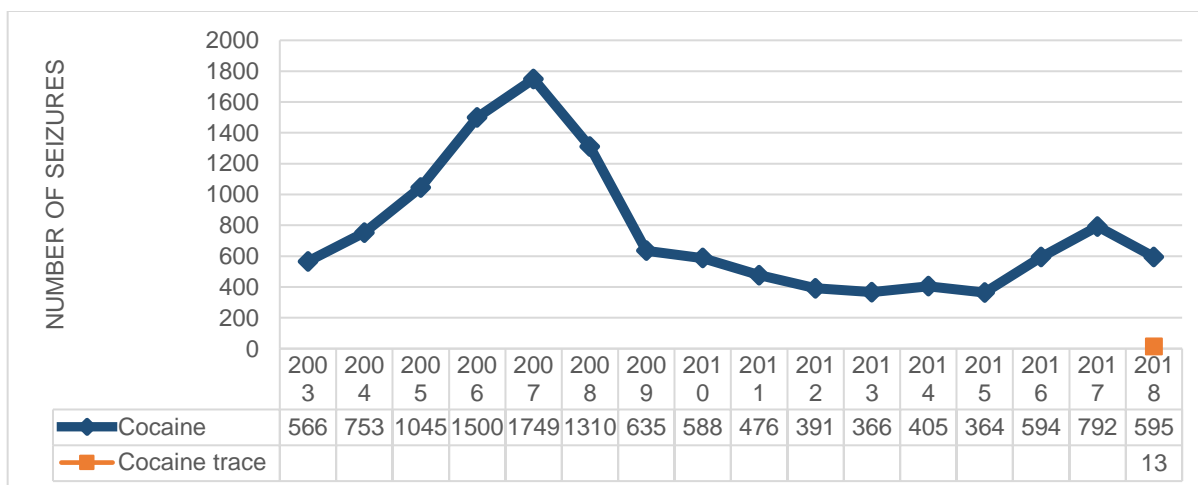


Figure T2.1.6 Trends in the number of cocaine seizures, 2003–2018

Source: (personal communication, FSI 2003–2019)

Stimulants other than cocaine: Table T2.1.1 shows a breakdown of the stimulants other than cocaine that were seized and analysed by FSI between 2012 and 2018. Since 2016, there has been a steady decline in analyses. Overall, in 2018, FSI analysed 398 stimulants other than cocaine; this was 26% lower than 2016 figures.

As shown in Table T2.1.1, a breakdown by substance indicates that the most prominent substance in this category is MDMA, followed by amphetamines and methylamphetamines. Following a peak in 2013 (434), the

number of MDMA seizures decreased until 2015 (202). Between 2015 and 2016, an increase of 71% was shown. Although the change in 2017 was negligible, between 2017 and 2018 the analyses of MDMA seizures decreased by 12%.

Following a steady decline between 2013 and 2015, amphetamine seizures peaked in 2016 (104). Between 2016 and 2017, a decline of 40% was recorded. However, a slight increase occurred in 2018 (12%) (see Table T2.1.1).

Table T2.1.1 Stimulants other than cocaine analysed by FSI, 2012–2018

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	470	671	598	346	537	467	398
alpha-PVP		81	64	46	50	24	
Amphetamine	90	77	75	63	104	62	67
Amphetamine (trace)							1
BZP	16	7	10	1	0	2	
Chloro-pyrrolidinovalerophenon							1
Desozypipradrol				1	0	0	
Dimethylone			2				
DMAA			1				
DOB			1				
Khat							3
MDEA		30	8	2	2	0	
MDMA	311	434	386	202	345	344	304
MDPV			6	1	4	1	
Mephedrone/MMC			4	6	3	4	
Methoxyamphetamine			7				
Methylamphetamine	53	37	24	4	28	29	21
Methylamphetamine (trace)							1
Methylphenidate			1				
Pentedrone			4	19	1	0	
Phentermine			1				
PMA		5	4	1	0	1	
Pyrrolidinovalerophenone (PVP)							2

Source: (personal communication, FSI, 2003–2019)

Hallucinogens: Figure T2.1.7 shows trends in the number of hallucinogen seizures between 2012 and 2018. Over the course of this time frame, a variety of hallucinogens have been seized, including DMT, ketamine, LSD, psilocin, and psilocybin. Overall, although an increasing trend was evident between 2015 and 2017, there was a 9% decrease between 2017 and 2018.

The most predominant hallucinogen seized in 2018 was ketamine (n=48); however, this was 11% lower than the number of ketamine seizures in 2017 (n=54). Between 2012 and 2013, the number of LSD seizures decreased by 58%, and between 2013 and 2016 it increased by one seizure each year. However, in 2017, only seven LSD seizures were reported. No LSD seizures were reported in 2018.

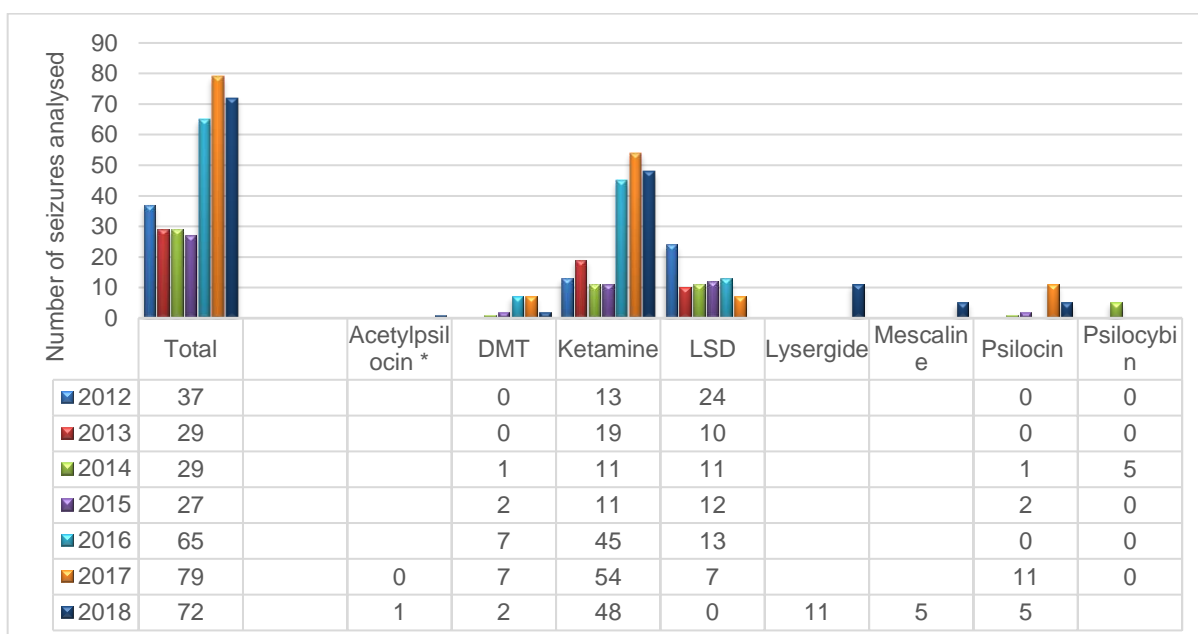


Figure T2.1.7 Trends in the number of seizures of hallucinogens, 2012–2018

Source: (personal communication, FSI, 2012–2019)

Note: *indicated, can mean not controlled in Ireland at time of analysis or small amount of material present.

Hypnotic and sedative drugs: Another factor that may be influencing seizure trends for illegal drugs is the illegal street sale of prescription drugs. Table T2.1.2 shows trends for some of the main prescription drugs, primarily benzodiazepines and Z-hypnotics, seized by AGS and analysed by FSI in recent years. Following a peak in 2013 (n=877), the number of seizures of hypnotic and sedative substances decreased annually until 2016. Although a 65% increase in these seizures was recorded between 2016 and 2017, a 48% decrease was recorded between 2017 and 2018.

The most prominent drug in this category in 2018 was alprazolam, followed by zopiclone and diazepam. Between 2017 and 2018, analyses on these drugs decreased by 47%, 43%, and 60%, respectively. In addition, in 2018, several analyses carried out by FSI indicated that a substance was present; diclazepam (10) and nitrazepam (n=13), etizolam (n=4), clonazepam (n=1), and diazepam (n=1).

Table T2.1.2 Seizures of a selection of benzodiazepines and Z-hypnotics, 2012–2018

Hypnotic and sedative drugs	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	690	877	834	404	356	615	318
Alprazolam	111	145	201	127	115	304	160
Bromazepam	.	.	.	1	.	.	.
Chlordiazepoxide	.	.	2	1	.	1	.
Clonazepam	15	16	13	12	6	10	4
Diazepam	463	450	420	175	141	155	62
Diclazepam	.	.	.	.	.	.	2
Etizolam	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
Flunitrazepam (Rohypnol)	9	6	1	.	.	.	.
Flurazepam	52	35	37	15	15	11	4
GBL	.	.	3	.	.	.	.
Lorazepam	1	.	1	.	.	.	2
Nitrazepam	.	.	2	1	.	.	2
Nordazepam	.	.	.	.	.	.	5

Hypnotic and sedative drugs	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Pentobarbitone	.	.	1	.	.	.	.
Phenobarbitone	.	.	1	.	.	.	.
Prazepam	.	.	1	.	.	.	.
Temazepam	12	6	4	1	1	.	.
Triazolam	11	7	12	2	4	5	1
Zolpidem	16	7	10	4	.	3	1
Zopiclone	.	205	125	65	74	126	72

Note. = no data available

Source: (personal communication, FSI, 2012-2019)

NPS: Table T2.1.3 shows trends for NPSs that are available on the Irish market. These data suggest that NPSs peaked in 2014 and have declined until 2017. Between 2017 and 2018, the overall total of NPSs analysed in Ireland increased by 79%; however, this is likely to be higher, a limitation of this table is that new substances that have been reported to the early warning system in 2018 are not included. In 2018, 5 NPSs were identified in analyses by the FSI; Fake Upjohn tablets, 25I-NBOMe, Coca Leaf (fine powder), ADB-Fubinaca and CBD/THC oils. Please refer to the Early Warning System Progress /final reporting form for further information on these detections.

Table T2.1.3 Seizures of NPS in Ireland, 2012–2017

NPS family		Type	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total			62	49	110	53	49	33	59
Arylcyclohexylamines	methoxetamine (MXE)		-	-	6	10	3	1	-
	AB-PINACA <i>indicated</i>		-	-	-	-	-	-	4
	ADB-FUBINACA <i>indicated</i>		-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	AMB-FUBINACA		-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	AMB-FUBINACA <i>indicated</i>		-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Cannabinoids (synthetic)	JWH-018		-	4	-	-	2	0	-
	JWH-073		-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	MDMB CHMICA		-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	STS-135		-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Cathinones (synthetic)	MEC		-	-	-	-	-	-	3
	4-Methylethcathinone or 4-MEC		-	-	23	-	-	-	-
	3',4'-Methylenedioxy- α -pyrrolidinobutyrophenone (MDPBP)		-	-	2	-	-	-	-
	Clephedrone		-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	Ethylone (3,4-methylenedioxy-N-ethylcathinone; MDEC)		-	-	6	4	0	0	1
	Ethylhexedrone		-	-	-	-	-	-	9
	Methedrone		-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	Methylone (3,4-methylenedioxy-N-methylcathinone, MDMC)		-	12	2	-	-	-	-
Indolalkylamines/ tryptamines	AMT		-	-	4	-	-	-	-
	U-51754 <i>indicated</i>		-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Opioids	Phenazepam		-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Benzodiazepines	Phenazepam <i>indicated</i>		-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Phenethylamines	2C-B		17	-	17	15	3	0	2
	2C-I		-	-	3	-	-	-	2
	Dimethoxychloramphetamine		-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	Flephedrone (4-Fluoramphetamine)		1	6	3	-	-	-	-
	N-Ethylpentylone		-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Piperazine derivatives	MBZP (1-benzyl-4-methylpiperazine)		-	-	1	1	0	0	-

NPS family	Type	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	mCPP (1-(3-chlorophenyl))	-	-	4	3	5	2	-
	TFMPP (trifluoro-methyl-phenylpiperazine)	44	26	24	8	2	2	-

Note: - = no data available

Source: (personal communication, FSI, 2012-2019)

Medicinal products: Table T2.1.4 shows a breakdown of medicinal products seized between 2012 and 2018. From 2012, the number of medicinal products seized peaked in 2014 (n=90). This was followed by a decrease of approximately 38% from 2014 to 2015. Seizures analysed peaked again in 2016. Since 2016, a year-on-year decrease has been evident, with 2018 figures being nearly two-thirds lower than 2016 figures. This is a positive outcome; however, it must be acknowledged that in 2018, a substantial number (n=81) of medicinal seizures were classified as 'indicated' or as having trace amounts of a medicinal substance.

The main drug seized in this category was benzocaine (n=13). The figure reported was 64% lower between 2017 and 2018 and is the lowest reported in the past five years. However, benzocaine was also indicated in 17 other analyses.

Table T2.1.4 Seizures of medicinal products in Ireland, 2012–2018

Medicinal products	Type	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total		8	54	90	56	78	45	29
Total substances indicated								81
Androgenic-anabolic steroids	Methandienone	-	9	7	3	-	-	2
	Methandienone indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	Methandrostenolone	-	-	6	2	4	-	-
	Methandrostenolone indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	Methyltestosterone	-	11	2	2	-	-	-
	Oxandrolone indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Oxymetholone	-	-	7	2	7	-	-
	Oxymetholone indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
	Stanozolol	-	5	8	2	2	2	-
	Stanozolol indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
	Trenbolone indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Corticosteroids	Prednisolone indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Antidepressant medications	Amitriptyline indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	Clomethiazole indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Lisdexamphetamine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Mirtazapine	-	-	5	1	0	-	-
	Mirtazapine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	Pregabalin indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
	Prochlorperazine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Quetiapine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	Sertraline indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Erectile dysfunction medicines	Sildenafil (viagra)	-	19	14	9	8	2	1
	Sildenafil indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Aesthetic/Pain-relief medications	Aspirin	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	Benzocaine	-	-	18	18	28	36	13
	Benzocaine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
	Benzocaine, caffeine and lignocaine	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Ephedrine (prevents low blood pressure during spinal anaesthesia)	8	3	-	-	-	-	3
	Lignocaine	-	-	9	12	2	1	-
	Lignocaine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	Paracetamol	-	-	5	1	25	3	3
	Paracetamol indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
	Paracetamol/caffeine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Paracetamol/tramadol indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Phenacetin	-	5	5	4	2	1	2
	Phenacetin indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	3

Medicinal products	Type	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Antihistamine	Chlorpheniramine	-	2	3	-	-	-	-
	Chlorphenamine	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Chlorpromazine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Chlorpheniramine and clozapine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Triprolidine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Bisoprolol indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Cyclizine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Dimethyl sulfone	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Note: - = no data available

Source: (personal communication, FSI, 2012-2019)

Other substances

Caffeine: As shown in Table T2.1.5, caffeine seizures reached a peak in 2016 (n=39). However, between 2016 and 2017, a decline of approximately 62% was shown. A further decline was evident in 2018, with only five analyses reported. However, caffeine was indicated in other analyses (n=16).

Table T2.1.5 Seizures of other substances in Ireland, 2012–2018

Other substances	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Caffeine	-	-	8	24	39	15	5
Analyses where caffeine was indicated							
Caffeine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Caffeine/cocaine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Caffeine/lignocaine indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Caffeine/paracetamol indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	8

Note: - = no data available

Source: (personal communication, FSI, 2012-2018)

2.2 Explanations of long-term trends and short-term trends in any other drug market data

No new information

2.3 Short/long term trends in drug law offences data

Garda-recorded incidents of drug offences

Crime data, which are collated on the PULSE system by AGS, are provided to the CSO for analysis. An incident may consist of more than one criminal offence, and a primary offence or detection may refer to one offence within an incident. Sometimes, a charged offence may be different from the offence originally identified in the incident. Nevertheless, incidents are a useful indicator of the level of particular types of criminal activities (Central Statistics Office 2014).

In September 2017, due to issues with the quality of data received from PULSE, crime statistics were suspended by the CSO. In 2018, the CSO announced that publication of crime statistics would resume; however, as the quality of PULSE data was still under review, they would be published in a new category: 'under reservation'. Essentially, what this means is that the crime statistics are considered to be of sufficient quality to allow publication; however, due to the ongoing issues with PULSE data, the quality does not meet the higher standard required of official statistics by the CSO (Central Statistics Office 2018, 28 March). Therefore, the figures that are provided here may not be the same as those in previous years' reports and are likely to change in the future, as quality issues

are resolved. What follows are the available statistics for recorded incidents of drug offences and court proceedings, as entered in the PULSE system by gardaí.

As Figure T2.3.1 shows, following a decline between 2008 and 2013, the total number of controlled drug offences recorded increased in 2014 (4%). Although a decline of 5% (from 15,862 to 15,047 offences) was recorded between 2014 and 2015, since then the number of drug offences recorded has increased annually; 2016 (7%), 2017 (5%) and 2018 (9%) (CSO, 2019, website).

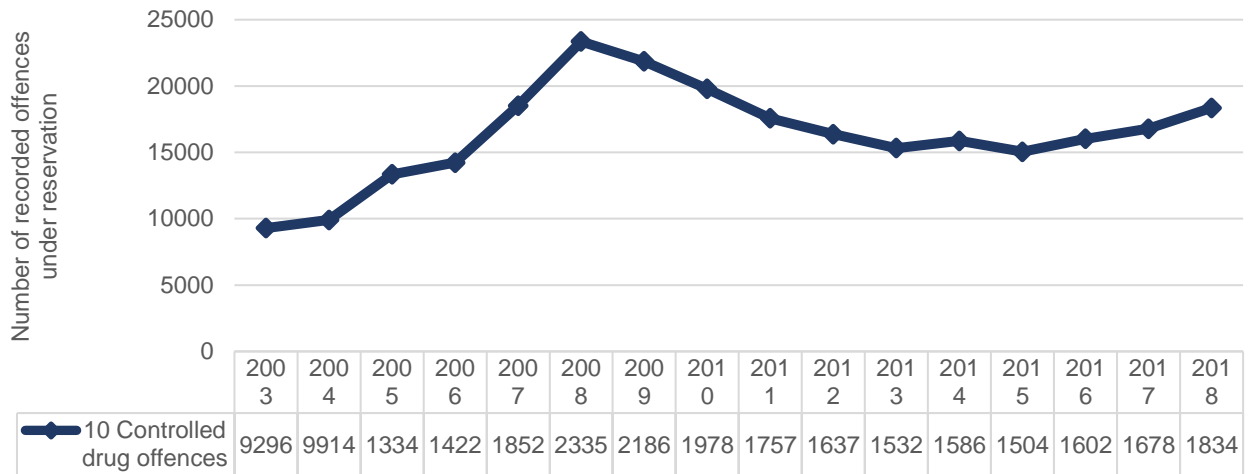


Figure T2.3.1 Recorded total number of controlled drug offences under reservation between 2003 and 2018
Source: CSO 2018, website



Figure T2.3.2 Map showing An Garda Síochána administration boundaries⁴

This section provides a breakdown of recorded incidents by region. Figure T2.3.3 shows a breakdown of importation of drugs offences by region and year. It clearly illustrates that the highest number of controlled drug offences was recorded in the Dublin Metropolitan Region (DMR). All

⁴ Available at <https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=647d12feb1444d63bb24f672ff6d9ffa>

regions, with the exception of the Western Region, are showing an increase in the number of incidences reported between 2017 and 2018.

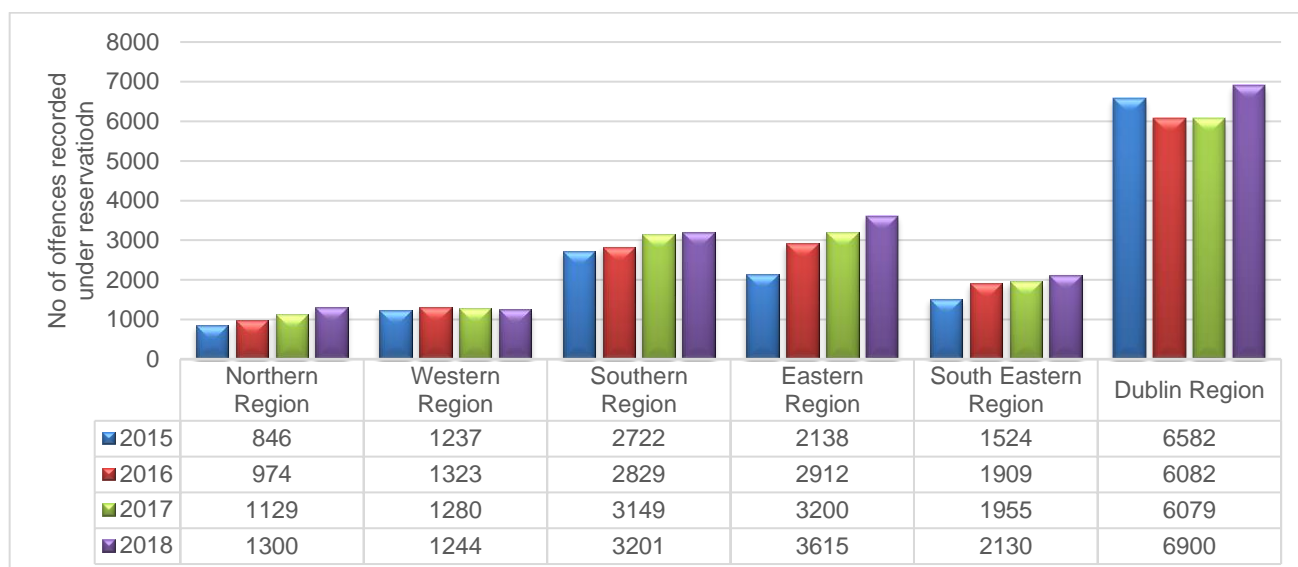


Figure T2.3.3 Recorded incidents of controlled drug offences, categorised by region, 2015–2018

Source: (personal communication, CSO, 2019)

Supply: Recorded incidents

Figure T2.3.4 shows the number of controlled drug offences by importation, or cultivation or manufacture of drugs, recorded under reservation between 2003 and 2017.

Importation of drugs

Essentially, from 2003 to 2018, an increase/decrease trend has been evident for recorded importation of drugs incidents. Increases were seen between 2005 and 2008 (86%), 2010 and 2011 (38%), 2012 and 2013 (47%), and 2015 and 2016 (47%). Decreases were seen between 2008 and 2010 (-57%), 2011 and 2012 (-25%), 2013 and 2015 (-57%), 2016 and 2017 (-25%) and 2017 and 2018 (-29%).

Cultivation or manufacture of drugs

Recorded incidents of the cultivation or manufacture of drugs increased steadily after 2004 and peaked in 2011. Alarmingly, between 2006 and 2010, the number of offences recorded quadrupled. A 9% increase was shown between 2010 and 2011. Between 2011 and 2015, there was a steady decline in the number of such incidents reported; 2015 figures were nearly 60% lower than 2011 figures. Although an increase was shown between 2015 and 2016 (10%), the number of recorded offences has declined since then; a decline of 6% was evident between 2016 and 2017 and a larger decline was evident between 2017 and 2018 (19%) (see Figure T2.3.4).

Windle (2017) (Windle 2017) argued that changes in trends between 2010 and 2012 could be explained by a) emigration, due to higher levels of young people that consume drugs leaving Ireland during the recession; or b) adaptation, where dealers and consumers adapted to having less income by growing their own product, which resulted in the decline of drug importation. Further information on this study can be found in Section T4.1 of this workbook. In addition, trends have also been impacted by operations by Irish law enforcement agencies that have specifically targeted drug crimes in recent years.

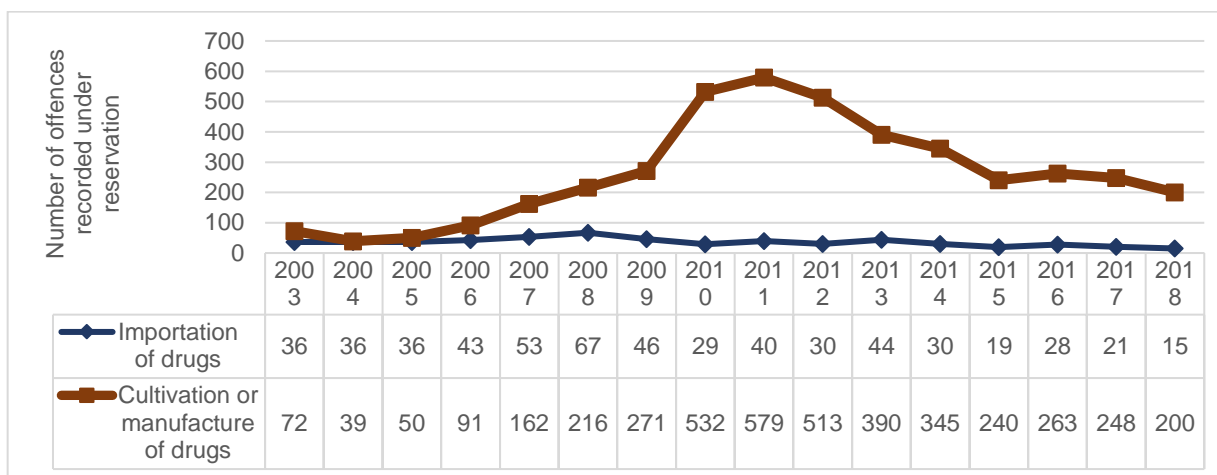


Figure T2.3.4 Recorded incidents of controlled drug offences categorised by importation of drugs, and by cultivation or manufacture of drugs, 2003–2018

Source: CSO, 2019, website

Supply: Recorded incidents by region

This section provides a breakdown of recorded incidents by region. Figure T2.3.5 shows a breakdown of importation of drugs offences by region and year. Although it clearly illustrates that the highest number of importation of drugs offences was recorded in the DMR, the number of incidents reported decreased by 50% between 2017 and 2018.

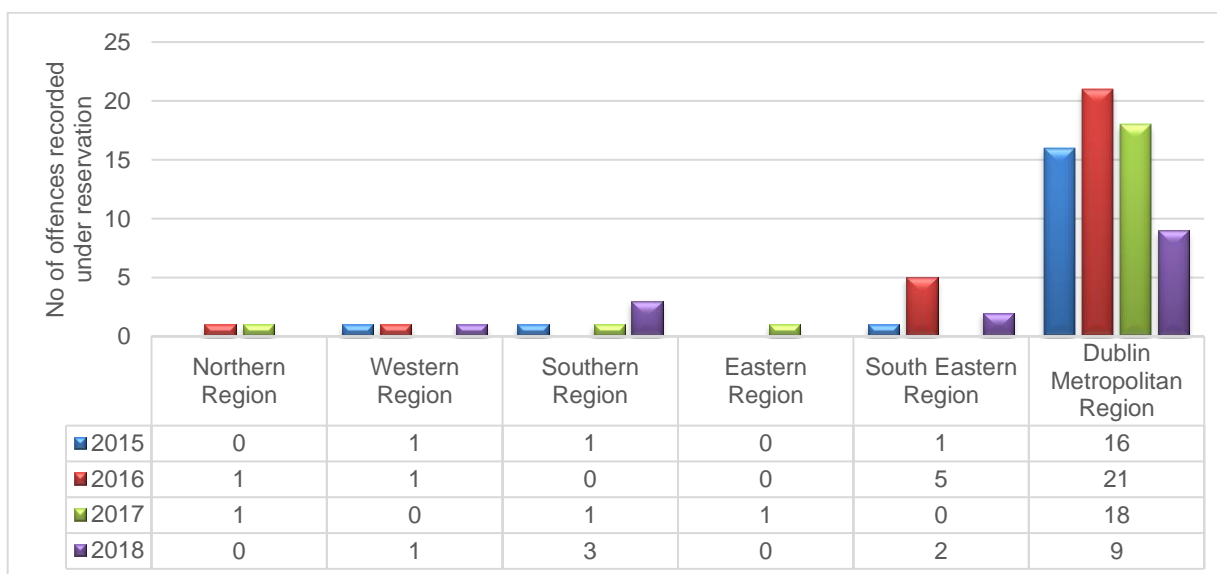


Figure T2.3.3 Recorded incidents of controlled drug offences, categorised by region, 2015–2018

Source: (personal communication, CSO, 2019)

Supply: Recorded incidents

Figure T2.3.4 shows the number of controlled drug offences by importation, or cultivation or manufacture of drugs, recorded under reservation between 2003 and 2017.

Importation of drugs

Essentially, from 2003 to 2018, an increase/decrease trend has been evident for recorded importation of drugs incidents. Increases were seen between 2005 and 2008 (86%), 2010 and 2011 (38%), 2012 and 2013 (47%), and 2015 and 2016 (47%). Decreases were seen between 2008 and 2010 (-57%), 2011 and 2012 (-25%), 2013 and 2015 (-57%), 2016 and 2017 (-25%) and 2017 and 2018 (-29%).

Cultivation or manufacture of drugs

Recorded incidents of the cultivation or manufacture of drugs increased steadily after 2004 and peaked in 2011. Alarming, between 2006 and 2010, the number of offences recorded quadrupled. A 9% increase was shown between 2010 and 2011. Between 2011 and 2015, there was a steady decline in the number of such incidents reported; 2015 figures were nearly 60% lower than 2011 figures. Although an increase was shown between 2015 and 2016 (10%), the number of recorded offences has declined since then; a decline of 6% was evident between 2016 and 2017 and a larger decline was evident between 2017 and 2018 (19%) (see Figure T2.3.4).

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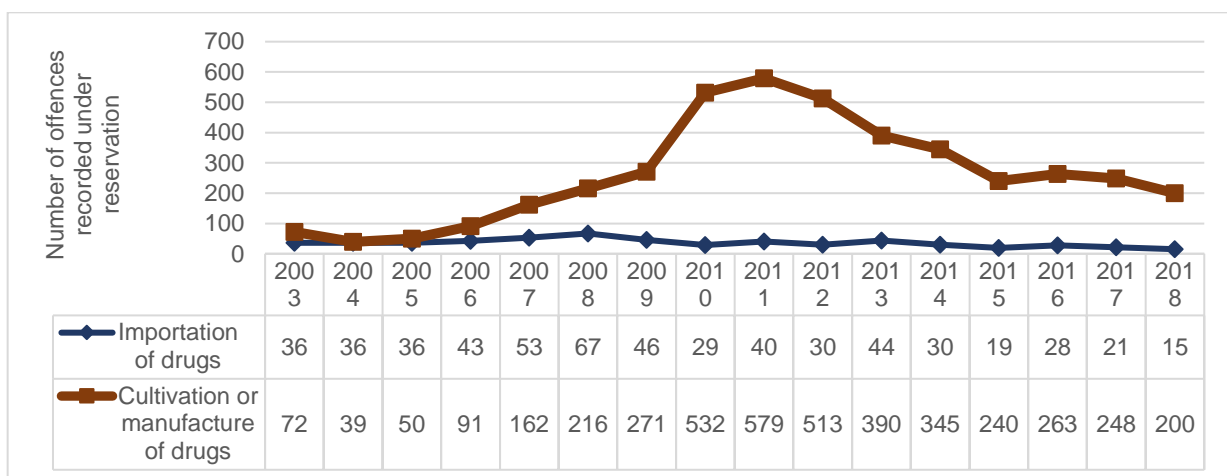


Figure T2.3.4 Recorded incidents of controlled drug offences categorised by importation of drugs, and by cultivation or manufacture of drugs, 2003–2018

Source: CSO, 2019, website

Supply: Recorded incidents by region

This section provides a breakdown of recorded incidents by region. Figure T2.3.5 shows a breakdown of importation of drugs offences by region and year. Although it clearly illustrates that the highest number of importation of drugs offences was recorded in the DMR, the number of incidents reported decreased by 50% between 2017 and 2018.

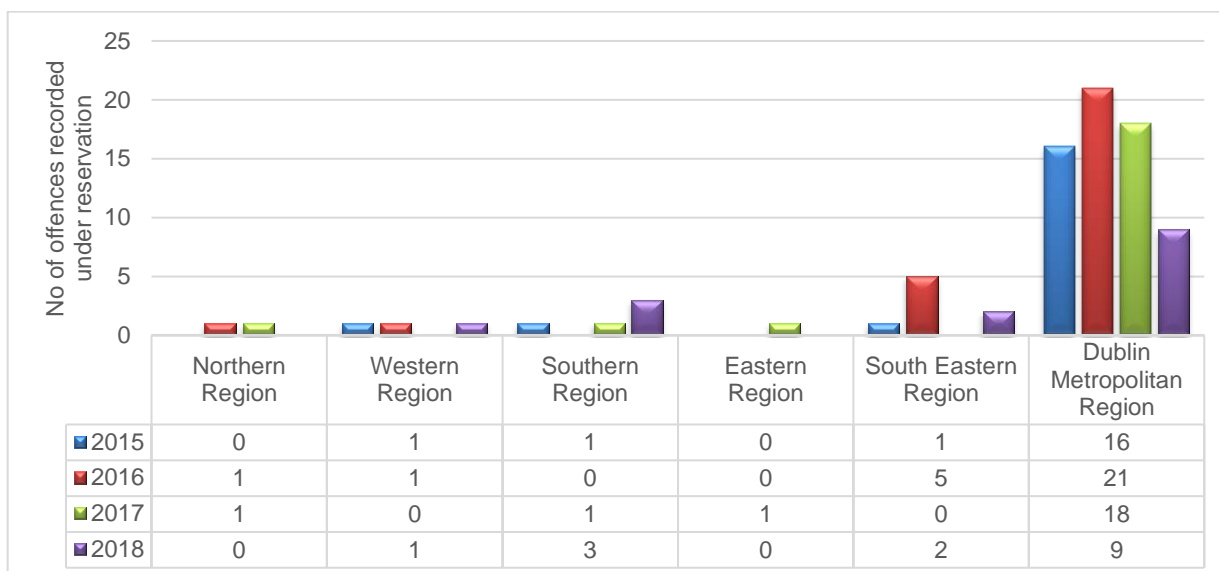


Figure T2.3.5 Recorded incidents of importation of drugs offences, categorised by region, 2015–2018

Source: (personal communication, CSO, 2019)

Figure T2.3.6 presents the frequency of recorded incidents of cultivation or manufacture of drugs offences by region from 2015 to 2018. Overall in 2018, the Southern Region reported the highest number of incidents and the Northern Region reported the lowest number of incidents. A decreasing trend was illustrated by all regions between 2017 and 2018 except for the Southern Region, where the number of incidents recorded increased by 26%. Incidents reported in the Dublin Metropolitan Region have decreased annually since 2015.

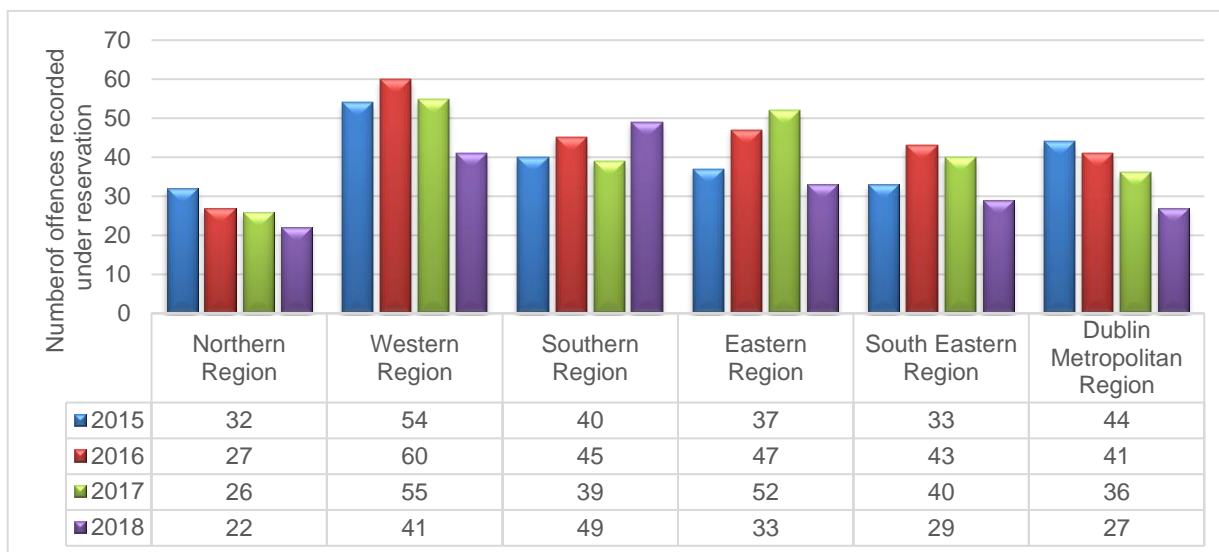


Figure T2.3.6 Recorded incidents of cultivation or manufacture of drugs offences, categorised by region, 2015–2018.

Source: (personal communication, CSO, 2019)

Possession of drugs for sale or personal use: Recorded incidents

Figure T2.3.7 shows the number of recorded incidents under reservation for possession of drugs for sale or supply and for personal use.

Possession of drugs for sale or supply

The number of recorded offences of possession of drugs for sale or supply nearly doubled between 2004 (n=2,183) and 2008 (n=4,265). A steady decline was seen overall between 2008 and 2013, except from 2009 to 2010, which showed a 3% increase. Since 2013, the number of incidents

recorded increased by 10% in 2014, followed by a decrease in 2015 (-6%). An increase in incidents of possession of drugs for sale or supply was shown annually between 2015 and 2016 (8%), 2016 and 2017 (6%), and between 2017 and 2018 (8%).

Possession of drugs for personal use

The number of incidents recorded of possession of drugs for personal use peaked in 2008 (n=18,075). This figure was nearly three times higher than that recorded in 2003. A decreasing trend was seen between 2008 and 2013. Since 2013, incidents recorded of possession of drugs increased in 2014 (1%, 86 more incidents), decreased in 2015 (3%, 318 fewer incidents). Between 2016 and 2018 reported incidents have increased annually, 4% (2016), 7% (2017) and 10% (2018) (see Figure T2.3.7).

A possible explanation for the increase in the number of drug offences recorded is that both supply and possession of drugs have increasingly been the target of focused operations by gardaí and other agencies in recent years.

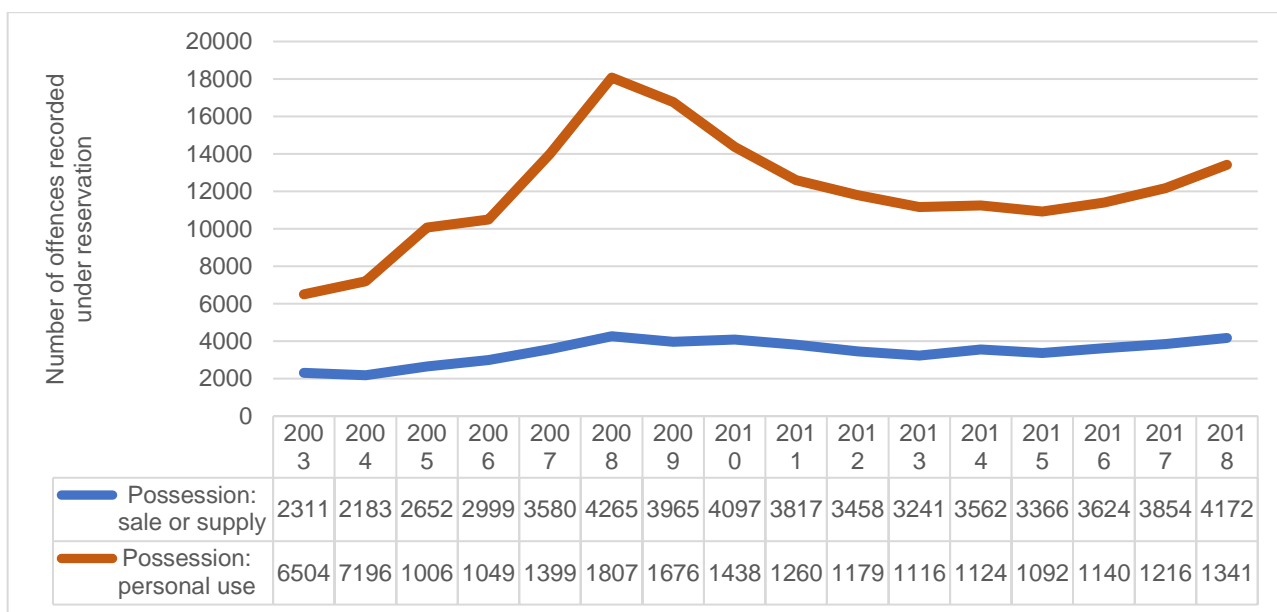


Figure T2.3.7 Recorded incidents of controlled drug offences categorised by possession for sale or supply or for personal use 2003–2018

Source: CSO 2019 website

Possession of drugs for sale or for personal use: Recorded incidents by region

As shown in Figure T2.3.8, between 2015 and 2018, the majority of recorded incidents for possession of drugs for sale or supply occurred in the DMR. In 2018, the number of incidents recorded in the DMR was approximately 16% higher in 2018 when compared to 2017 and was four times higher than the number recorded in the Southern Region (n=584) and Eastern Region (n=583) and nearly 11 times higher than in the Northern Region (n=203).

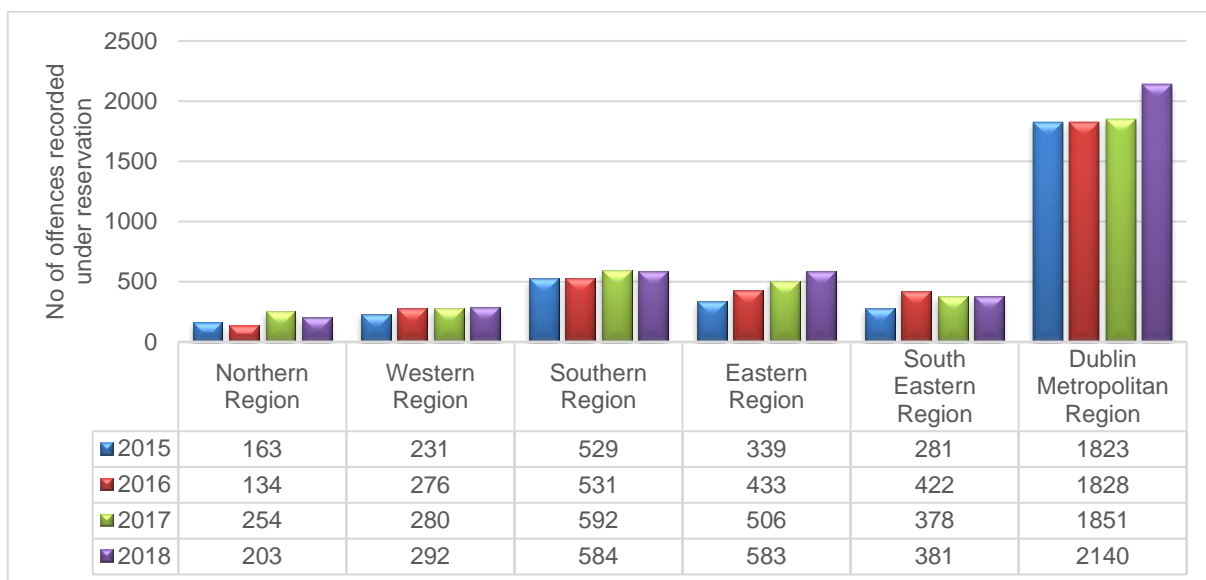


Figure T2.3.8 Recorded incidents of possession of drugs for sale or supply offences, categorised by region 2015–2018

Source: (personal communication, CSO, 2019)

Similar to Figure T2.3.8, Figure T2.3.9 also indicates that the highest number of recorded incidents of possession of drugs for personal use occurred in the DMR. The number of recorded incidents of possession of drugs was lowest in the Western Region.

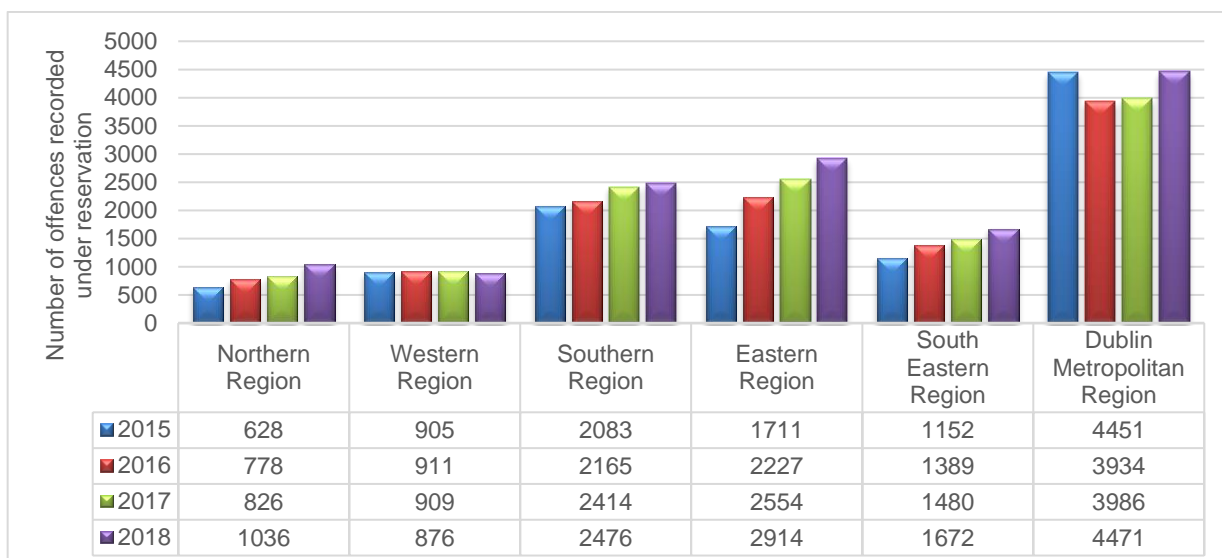


Figure T2.3.9 Recorded incidents of possession of drugs for personal use offences, categorised by region, 2015–2018

Source: (personal communication, CSO, 2019)

Garda-recorded crime statistics: Court proceedings between 2010 and 2014

Court proceedings statistics are recorded by AGS for controlled drug offences – specifically, supply and possession. However, due to the suspension of crime statistics in 2017, no new data are available this year. The most recent data available are reported in Section 2.3, Figure T2.3.4 and Tables T.2.3.1 and T2.3.2 in the Drug market and crime workbook, National Report 2017 (Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction 2018a).

Defence Forces

As stated in Section T1.1.4 of the Legal workbook, compulsory random drug testing (CRDT) and targeted drug testing has existed for Defence Forces personnel (the Army, the Air Corps, the Naval Service, and the Reserve) since 2002 and 2009, respectively. Table T2.3.1 shows the total number of personnel who were tested between 2009 and 2018 (Kehoe 2017, 11 April) (Department of

Defence 2018) (Department of Defence 2019). Table T2.3.2 shows a breakdown by organisation between 2015 and 2017 (Department of Defence 2019) (Department of Defence 2018) (Department of Defence 2017). Overall, in the past five years, 68 Defence Forces personnel have tested positive for drugs. Between 2017 and 2018, positive test results increased by approximately a 27% (n=4).

At the start of 2018, four Defence Forces personnel were in the targeted drug testing programme, and four more joined the programme through the year. Of these personnel, three finished the process and remained in service, two tested positive for controlled drugs and were put back into the administrative process. In December 2018, three personnel remained on the programme. All targeted drug tests in 2017 were negative (n=16) (Department of Defence 2019).

Table T2.3.1 Details of compulsory random drug tests, 2009–2018

Year	Total tested	Negative tests	Positive tests
2009	1719	-	6
2010	1586	-	7
2011	1362	-	6
2012	2058	-	16
2013	1054	1041	13
2014	1092	1087	5
2015	1184	1167	17
2016	1204	1192	12
2017	1187	1172	15
2018	1101	1082	19
Total	13547		116

Source: Department of Defence

Table T2.3.2 Details of compulsory random drug tests completed, by organisation, 2015–2018

Brigade/formation	2015		2016		2017		2018	
	Number tested	Positive tests*	Number tested	Positive tests	Number tested	Positive tests	Number tested	Positive tests
1 Brigade	553	-	453	5	433	1	530	8**
2 Brigade	220	-	376	2	357	4	310	1
Defence Forces	54	-	242	4	146	3	111	2
Training Centre		-						
Air Corps	230	-	47	1	87	1	70	2
Naval Service	76	-	86	0	164	6	80	6
Total	1133	-	1204	12	1187	15	1101	6

Source: Department of Defence

* Data for positive tests by location was not provided in 2015.

** including two positives in 2018 under heading "Failure to Report".

2.4 Other drug offences

Other drug offences

The category 'possession/supply drug offences, drug-related crime' also has a classification for other drug offences, which includes forged or altered prescription/obstruction offences.

Forged or altered prescription/obstruction offences under the Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977-2017

Following a peak in 2009 (n=824), the number of other drug offences recorded decreased until 2011. Between 2011 and 2012, the number of incidents recorded increased by 10%. Offences recorded declined between 2012 and 2013 by nearly 16%, following which an increase of 39% was evident between 2013 and 2014. Although a substantial decrease (27%) was shown in this category between 2014 and 2015, crimes recorded increased by 44% from 494 in 2015 to 711 in 2016. Another decrease was evident in 2017 (31%). Between 2017 and 2018, there was an increase of 10% (see Figure T2.4.1).

Driving under the influence of drugs

Driving under the influence of drugs has been a statutory offence in Ireland since the enactment of the Road Traffic Act, 1961. The number of offences of driving under the influence of drugs peaked in 2009 (n=873). A decreasing trend for this offence was evident between 2009 (n=873) and 2016 (n=217). Since 2016, the number of offences recorded increased in 2017 (29%) and substantially in 2018 (84%) (see Figure T2.4.1) (CSO, [interactive tables](#) 2019). This increase was not surprising; due to provisions in the Road Traffic Act 2016, preliminary roadside drug testing by AGS commenced in Ireland in April 2017. More information on roadside drug testing can be found in the next section. Further information on the Road Traffic Act 2016 can be found in Section T3.1 of the Legal workbook.

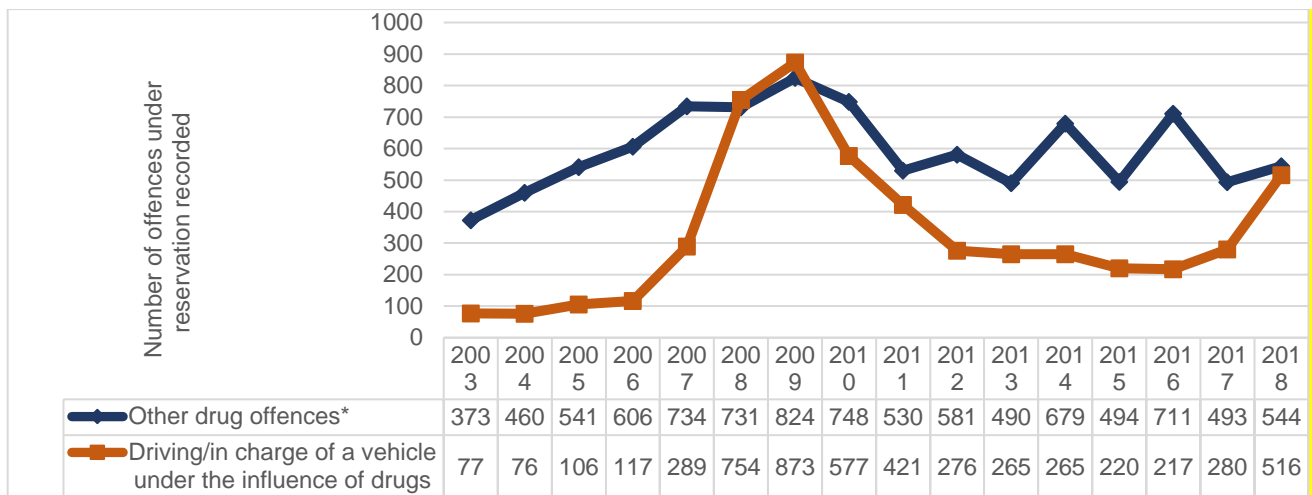


Figure T2.4.1 Recorded incidents of other drug offences and driving under the influence of drugs under reservation, 2003–2018

Source: (CSO interactive tables)

*Other drug offences include forged or altered prescription offences and obstruction under the Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977–2017.

By region

Figure T2.4.3 presents the frequency of recorded incidents for driving or being in charge of a vehicle while under the influence of drugs by region between 2015 and 2018. Overall, the data indicate that the frequency of incidents reported has increased substantially across regions, with the highest shown in the Dublin Metropolitan Region followed by the Southern Region. In 2017, the Southern Region reported the same number of offences as the Dublin Metropolitan Region (n=71). As stated above, a possible explanation for this is that in April 2017, a new measure to address this offence was introduced: roadside drug testing. Further information can be found on this in the next section on roadside drug testing.

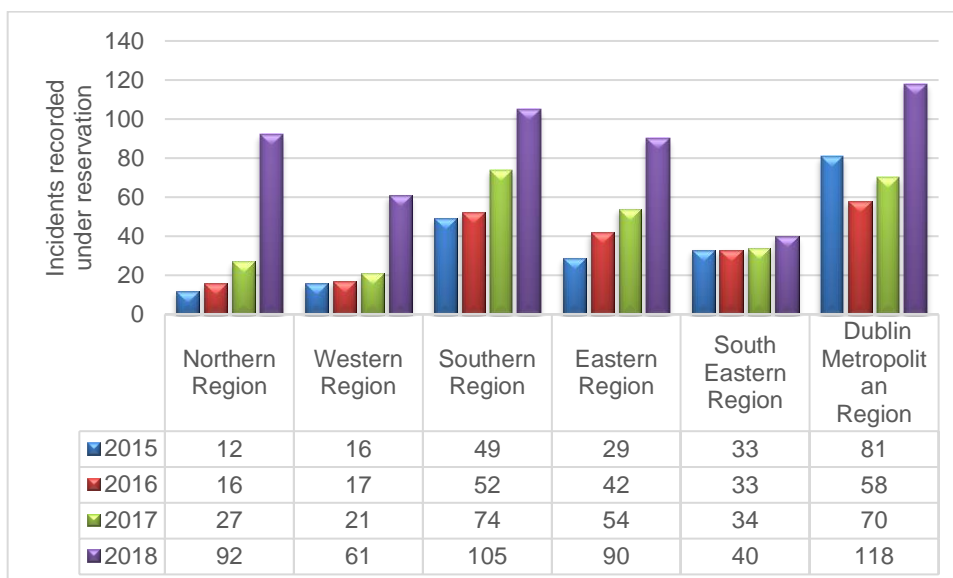


Figure T2.4.3 Recorded incidents of driving/being in charge of a vehicle while under the influence of drugs, categorised by region, 2015–2018

Source: (personal communication, CSO, 2019)

Roadside drug testing

Since April 2017, gardaí have been carrying out Preliminary Drug Testing (PDT), using the Dräger Drug Test 5000 device, on motorists who are thought to be driving under the influence of drugs. The device tests the driver's oral fluid (saliva) for the presence of cannabis, cocaine, opiates (such as heroin, morphine) and benzodiazepines (such as valium). Recent figures suggest that drug driving is an issue in Ireland. Table T2.4.1 shows a breakdown of drugs analyses carried out between 2016 and 2018 by the Medical Bureau of Road Safety (MBRS) (Cusack 2019). The 2,144 analyses carried out in 2018 resulted in 1,628 positive tests (76%). This was 63% higher than in 2017. The substantial increase between 2017 and 2018 is the result of the implementation of legislative changes that gave more powers to gardaí to carry out PDT at roadside checkpoints or in Garda stations (Sheehan 2019). As a result, there has been an increased focus on the performance of roads policing members (Sheehan 2019). Gardaí have been further supported by the upgrade of Dräger Drug Test 5000 to Dräger 7510 (Sheehan 2019).

Table T2.4.1 Summary of drugs analyses 2016–2018

Year	Tested	% Increase/decrease	Number of positive tests	% of positive tests
2016	1108		813	72%
2017	1592	44%	997	63%
2018	2144	35%	1628	76%

Source: (Cusack 2019)

While alcohol is the most common drug found in blood and urine samples, the MBRS have found that the next prominent drug found was cannabis (68%), followed by cocaine (37%), opiates (7.9%) and benzodiazepines (5.2%) (Cusack 2019). The most prominent age profile of drivers screening positive was those aged 25–34 years, followed by those aged ≤ 24 years, and then those aged 35–44 years (Road Safety Authority 2019).

Garda recorded court proceedings between 2010 and 2013 for other drug offences

Other drug offences

No new data are available this year. The most recent data can be found in the Drug market and crime workbook, National Report 2017 (see Section T2.4, Table T2.4.2).

Driving under the influence of drugs

No new data are available this year. Please see Section T2.4, Table T2.4.3 of the Drug market and crime workbook, National Report 2017, for a breakdown of recorded and detected crimes and their associated court proceedings status for drug driving between 2010 and 2014.

3. New developments

3.1 New or topical developments observed in the drug market in Ireland since 2015

Cannabis for medicinal use and decriminalisation of cannabis have continued to be topics of debate in the last 12 months. For an update, please see the Policy workbook and the Legal Framework workbook.

Drug economy and youth interventions

The launch of a report on The Drug Economy and Youth Interventions: An Exploratory Research Project on Working with Young People Involved in the Illegal Drugs Trade (Bowden 2019) was held in April 2019. The drug economy and youth interventions: an exploratory research project on working with young people involved in the illegal drugs trade. Dublin: CityWide Drugs Crisis Campaign. <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/30487/>. The report stems from a 2016 study on drug-related intimidation that identified a need to explore the issue of early intervention with young people involved in drug distribution in Ireland (Connolly and Buckley 2016). Demanding money with menace: drug-related intimidation and community violence in Ireland. Dublin: Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign. <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/25201/>. Bowden's report presents the findings of an exploratory study based on a review of the Irish and international literature on violence and intimidation in the illegal drug trade and in-depth qualitative interviews with seven practitioners working in the drugs field in Dublin. The findings are outlined in section T3.1 of the Prevention Workbook.

4. Additional information

4.1 Specific studies

No new studies

5. Sources and methodology

5.1 Sources

Web sites, annual reports and unpublished data from the following agencies are the 'notable' sources of information:

[An Garda Síochána](#)

[Central Statistics Office](#)

[Courts Service](#)

[Defence Forces](#)

[Department of Health](#)

[Department of Justice and Equality](#)

[Forensic Science Ireland](#)

[Garda Ombudsman](#)

[Houses of the Oireachtas](#)

[Irish Prison Service](#)

[Irish Statute Book](#)

[Law Reform Commission](#)

[Policing Authority](#)

[Probation Service](#)

[Revenue Commissioners](#)

5.2 Methodology

No New studies

5.3 References

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European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) is a decentralised EU agency based in Lisbon. The EMCDDA provides the EU and its Member States with information on the nature, extent, consequences and responses to illicit drug use. It supplies the evidence base to support policy formation on drugs and addiction in both the European Union and Member States.

There are 30 National Focal Points that act as monitoring centres for the EMCDDA. These focal points gather and analyse country data according to common data-collection standards and tools and supply these data to the EMCDDA. The results of this national monitoring process are supplied to the Centre for analysis, from which it produces the annual *European drug report* and other outputs.

The Irish Focal Point to the EMCDDA is based in the Health Research Board. The focal point writes and submits a series of textual reports, data on the five epidemiological indicators and supply indicators in the form of standard tables and structured questionnaires on response-related issues such as prevention and social reintegration. The focal point is also responsible for implementing Council Decision 2005/387/JHA on the information exchange, risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances.

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